

SPEAKER BARRETT: The Chair recognizes Senator Beyer.

SENATOR BEYER: Mr. Speaker and colleagues, this is kind of an urgent matter for the university. We talked about it last year. Senator Coordsen talked about it this year. I did not vote on the issue. I think it probably deserves consideration. The vote was pretty close. And, with that, I would relinquish the rest of my time to Senator Coordsen.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Coordsen.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body, and thank you, Senator Beyer, for your consideration in this issue. As he indicated, we did come within three votes of adding this particular measure to 1031 on Monday afternoon. It's my feeling that there may have been members of the body that didn't understand quite clearly enough the importance of this particular capital investment to agriculture in the State of Nebraska. In addition, it has been brought to my attention that the Bush administration's proposals for the new farm bill include a \$100 million in federal research funds for land grant and other institutions in ag related research in the event that the administration's proposals should be passed into law by Congress. Research is a tool of everyone and certainly a tool of agriculture, the reason that we can have the cheapest food in the world right here in the United States. I think it is important upon...or it is incumbent upon us to ensure that Nebraska gives the indication of having agriculture in the forefront of its initiatives here in the state. If we are to stand any chance of getting our fair share of these new R&D funds, should they become available, we need to be prepared or be on our way to being prepared to have the facilities in which to conduct the research. As I indicated Monday, biotechnology is making breakthroughs in many areas, not only in agriculture but in the medical field and other issues. You cannot move these new discoveries into practical application without an operable, functional greenhouse system to bring the agronomical facts into practical reality. We wouldn't be as far as we are in the renovation of the greenhouses had it not been for the foresight and wisdom of the Appropriations Committee last year in putting the \$1 million into the appropriation, the biennial capital appropriation, that they did. For reasons that I do not understand, this issue is number 14 on the list of priorities of the whole system as far as capital construction is concerned.