

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. Obviously, I'm opposed to the Lamb amendment because I've said several times I'm in support of setting a specific date to deal with this and I'm also opposed to setting up a dual standard where we have some licensed and some unlicensed. I would like to answer Senator Coordsen's question about people groping in the dark, there's no standards out there, there's no guidelines that these landfills can follow. That's not necessarily true. You know, we have some thirtysome licensed facilities already in the state. We have some five private landfills that are operating. They've met the standards the state already has and Senator Schmit pointed that out in the public hearing. It's strange how these public...or private operators seem to be able to meet the standards that are in law today or in rule and reg and yet these public facilities are saying, well, we don't know what the standards are. There are standards out there. They may not be the standards we necessarily like but there are at least a number of municipalities and some private operators who have met the standards and are licensed and are being regulated. So the argument that we're groping in the dark is not necessarily true. The argument really is, well, those standards are out there but they're kind of expensive and we really don't want to do anything about it. So the study will help us define our waste stream, better define how we should move forward with public policy, but I think, as I've said over and over again, I don't know how you're going to bring parties to the table with just asking them to do another study. So I guess, at this particular point, I'm opposed to the Lamb amendment. One of the things that I'm deeply concerned with, now that the Morrissey amendment was just adopted, we've basically advocated giving our decision-making authority on the date specific on the Whitney amendment to the DEC to decide now. And I have little confidence that they're going to have the guts to set a date to close those landfills. I don't like giving our authority now to the DEC to decide when that Whitney amendment will be repealed. I think it was a mistake that we adopted it but it's on the bill now and we'll see what progress it makes. But the argument on the Lamb amendment is the same one we heard previously and, quite frankly, the body voted earlier this morning to repeal the first amendment that was adopted yesterday. I don't see that this is being much different of an argument other than we're placing the burden now on the cities as opposed to the state to determine water quality. I don't know if that's acceptable to them or not but, nonetheless, I will reiterate my willingness to move this bill forward today and try and work with the parties