

light. Senator Rod Johnson, do you wish to close on the committee amendments?

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me remind you what the committee amendments are preparing to do. First of all, they address the funding levels. We've talked briefly or maybe I should say extensively about the tank registration fee, but there is also a funding mechanism that affects the purchase of petroleum and we doubled those fees. Secondly, the...as I said, there is a trigger mechanism both to trigger the doubling of the fees when the fund falls below a million dollars and there is also a trigger mechanism which shuts the spout off, basically, when the fund reaches 3 million or above. At that point, the program or the doubling in the fees ceases and it goes back to its normal level so that we're not raising large volumes of money with no obligation for where that money might go. And, finally, I guess we're extending this whole state insurance program to include third-party liability coverage. Again, I was anticipating that might be the most controversial part of the bill, but it sounds as if the funding level is the one that's generating the most controversy. I guess, all I can tell you is that the biggest concern here is I'm paying something into the fund and I'm questioning whether I'm getting any benefit from the fund. Well, we can argue, I guess, at great length whether or not there is beneficial use for the program. I haven't heard anybody say the program isn't worthwhile. I have heard a lot of people talk about how inequitable it is but that really deals with the whole up-front \$25,000 deductible that, basically, marketers and farmers and ranchers and everybody else who pays into this fund, who has a tank over 1,100 gallons has to pay, is also covered by the program if they want to invest the first 25,000. Now, we can address...and I pledge to the body that we will address that issue of that first up-front 25,000. I don't know what the answer is there. I wish I had a better answer for that. But I didn't create the program, I'm simply trying to make the program workable and, secondly, make it acceptable to the EPA so that they can approve our fund, and so we have a fund that is legally responsible to the EPA as well as to the State of Nebraska. I think the committee amendments try and do that and I would ask the body to adopt those.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Rod Johnson. You have heard the closing on the committee amendments. We will now proceed to vote on the adoption of the committee amendments. All those in