

able to determine whether or not, number one, the fund is actuarially sound; number two, whether or not we think that we have played fair with the Chief Industries; number three, whether or not we think we're playing fair with the plant at Sutherland which has started out their process of construction, then we can act upon this amendment on Select File if, in fact, we think it is necessary. But the reason for this amendment is very plain. This amendment will continue the production credit on existing production through December 31 of this year. We will then revert back to the other language which was in Senator Smith's proposal. I want to say that I think it's important, I cannot emphasize how strongly I feel about this. It is important to know that we are not going to overdraw at the bank on this fund. We do not have the right of appropriation. We cannot just come back in and refill the bucket once it is depleted. I do not want to get in the position and I hope that you who are listening to me understand that I'm not doing this out of pick or otherwise. I do not want to get into the position where contracts have been signed, negotiations have been completed between the Ethanol Authority and Chief Industries, the gentleman at Sutherland, Mr. Schleisinger or anyone else, and then find that this Legislature has done something and made some promises which we cannot fulfill. If, in fact, we've done that, then we're in the position of again determining whether or not we have on this floor abridged the contract. I know that it's awfully easy to stand up here and talk about these things, but if we're going to spend more money than can be properly justified through the fund, through the amount of money we have in the fund at this time, then we need to look at some options. Do we want to reinstate the checkoff so as to guarantee some renewed money for the fund? Do we want to deliver a message to the Ethanol Authority not to negotiate any further contracts, because this is all the money you've got? If we don't adopt some policy, ladies and gentlemen, then no policy becomes the policy and that is the way we've been flying the last couple of years. We do not have that luxury and we cannot afford it and I'm asking you in good faith to help me find those numbers so that we do not just shoot from the hip. This has not been a 30-day wonder so far as my efforts are concerned. I've spent a lifetime on this program and I think I know as much about it as anyone. I'm not considered an expert in very many things and probably not in this, but to the extent that there is an ethanol industry in Nebraska, the credit goes to this Legislature because in 1971 we enacted the bill and Governor Exon signed it which kicked off the program. It has