

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members, it's difficult to argue the fact that...or the issue that Senator Ashford brings up because, as I mentioned in my opening on the committee amendments, there are no composting plants currently on line in Nebraska. As I mentioned, there are, however, three being proposed in Iowa that are under construction or being on the project drawing boards. One of those happens to be located in Council Bluffs and I'm wondering if there is not a chance that some of this material could not be processed in that facility when it comes on line in Council Bluffs. Secondly, the reason I am not going to vote for the Ashford amendment, I think, is some of the arguments raised here that there are currently two studies under way that deal with the issue of the whole solid waste stream and this issue of biodegrading and composting. The study mandated in LB 325 is under way. All we really wanted to do with this bill was to include in that study the prospect of looking at composting as an alternative in the marketplace for compostable diapers and other compostable products that we could divert away from our waste stream out of our landfill and be processed back into this humus-like soil that could be used by a variety of different entities from agriculture to gardens to wherever we might want to apply them, because we...when you compost you're actually turning a product back into what we hope will be a very environmentally safe type of product. Secondly, we have a solid...comprehensive solid waste plan study mandated through LB 163 from a year ago that is under way currently that I hope, and Senator Morrissey may touch on this, we hope may address the issue of composting and I think really when you look at the whole waste stream issue, as I said earlier, up to 60 percent, maybe more than that, could be diverted from the landfill, could be composted and utilized in different ways, from yard waste to this...these diapers to other kinds of products now being sold in the marketplace. If, in fact, we reach a point where composting is an alternative to the landfill, I think, we'll be very...environmentally we'll be much better off. So I guess I would rather allow these studies to continue. As I said, all we're trying to do is plug another component into the DEC study so they look at the issue of composting diapers as opposed...as not opposed to but in cooperation with their study on biodegradable diapers. Senator Morrissey knows, and as others who worked on the landfill issue know, the problem we have somewhat with biodegradability is that sometimes these diapers or other products that are supposed to be biodegradable do not degrade because they need a variety of