

financing and funding of major expansion, then these things aren't just a million dollars here and there, these are expensive projects and that is the reason there aren't a lot in the state is because they are an extremely expensive project to start. And they are risky, and that is all the more reason for our protection, and I think we should move to the production credits instead of giving the investment authority, and giving these people grants or loans of money or whatever; that you ought to reward them for actual production. And I think we ought to keep our word to those plants, particularly the Hastings plant that has already gone out and started to expand, because in the short term and in the long term, they are the ones that are going to be able to produce ethanol. They are the ones that are going to put it out. They are the ones that are going to help the agricultural industry, and they certainly have had an impact on grain prices in the area, and they will continue to have an impact because it ripples out.

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: The further you get away from that area, the more impact they...the less impact but they still have an impact on the grain price. So I would support the concept of a checkoff. We should not take that money out of the Highway Trust Fund. I would like to take that money right now so the Highway Trust Fund doesn't fund the ethanol production, but at least at this point, we're there until 1994. What we need at least of the highway users is to say, look, we don't get the direct benefit. Besides we are giving a two cent at the pump break right now, and we are having to eat that. So in 1994, this is sort of a compromise is to take the Highway Trust Funds out of this, make the people who actually do benefit from this, which is the grain producer, with their checkoffs, and I think it is a lot sounder system but we have got a commitment that we made to the ethanol plant, the only ethanol plant in the State of Nebraska. I don't think now is not the time to retreat off of that commitment. Now is the time to give them a stable business environment and let them do the things that we want to do, and that is...

SPEAKER BAACK: Time.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: ...produce ethanol in the State of Nebraska.