

fund drops \$5 million. So we are looking for that to only happen when the fund begins to be used and exhausted. In Section 9, we also add a new section which also is somewhat controversial in that we take the Ethanol Authority out of the business of providing investment equity in companies and switch the Ethanol Authority basically to providing only production credits or income tax credits to companies interested in either production of ethanol or ETBE. That's, in large part, what the bill would do or the amendment would do. As I said, we are not in general agreement on all of this, but I think a majority of it is something that most of us could buy into. Now we have heard the case made that we should probably not be subsidizing or maybe we should be subsidizing the purchase of the Hastings plant and the production that they are providing. That is a policy question that we will argue here this afternoon, but as I said, I hope this is the vehicle that we can start with because, in talking to Senator Schmit and others, I think for the most part, most of us agree about 95 percent of this amendment is something that people can live with. There are some parts and pieces that maybe somebody doesn't like, but I hope, at least, we will start with the same premise we used on the personal property tax issue, and adopt the amendment and then begin to talk about the individual policy questions, about the investment equity issue, or about the production credit level, or about whether we should be talking at all about reinstating a checkoff at some future date. So with that, I would like to at least ask the indulgence of the body to adopt the amendment at this point, and then start the process of arguing individual issues later. Thank you.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Rod Johnson. Before I go to the next speaker, I would like to introduce some guests of Senator Peterson, and they are under the south balcony. We have his daughter, Julie Fischer, and grandson, Ty. They are from Grand Island. Would you please stand and be welcomed by the Legislature. Thank you for being with us. The first speaker I have is Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Well, Mr. President and members, I hope that we will all listen very carefully. There are many parts of the Johnson amendment which I have no quarrel with. There are several, which Senator Rod Johnson has outlined, and which I will address, and I believe it is important that we address that issue, but before that I want to clear up a couple of things, and that is that, again, as I said this morning, this bill was