

to put this together and assess this amendment along with the others. At this point, I certainly would object to Senator Beutler's amendment, if I understand it correctly. And I'll ask him, is that then to assess all farmland in the special water protection area at 3 cents? Rod shakes his hand, so then I have it. I have a little problem with this. And, as you know, down in the valley, west of Grand Island, we do have nitrate problems, we have contamination, whether it be from feedlots, or when we're finger-pointing how many of us put the fertilizer and the chemicals on our lawn with no accountability whatsoever. A lot of these small towns have these wells within the confines of these towns. The only thing I would have to say is, sure, people are aware, they're very much aware, they don't put...in these particular Phase I and Phase II areas, they don't put nitrogen on in the fall. And I know that farmers, along with all of us, have been very careless in the past few years. But you're not going to necessarily clean that up over night. And I'm very familiar with the testing. Within a quarter mile you find maybe like 15 parts per million difference. So you have to question that. But the problem is there. But the 3 cents is just way too much. I will probably support the half cent, and I'm not sure that it's right. It's another tax on farmland, a tax on something else for the whole district. But I certainly do oppose the Beutler amendment, if I understood it correctly. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Nelson. Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Madam President, members, the debate on this bill is a forerunner of the debate which we will have in 2, 5, 10, 20 years as the problem becomes more acute. And although I do not necessarily agree with Senator Beutler, I think we owe him a vote of thanks for calling attention to the fact that pinpointing the responsibility for the contamination of groundwater is going to be a major problem and a major point of contention in years to come. And then again, of course, who shall pay? Shall the costs be spread over a greater area and borne by the general public, or shall it be paid for by those who purportedly might have caused the problem? Now the fact is it's very difficult to identify exactly who causes these problems. We know, for example, that in the Platte Valley, where the water table is high, that there are instances where contamination of the groundwater occurred rather easily because of the application of nitrate fertilizers. Is it not also possible then that a very common practice and a very good one of