

certify, and, hopefully, are applying those chemicals, and I think for the most part or most cases are doing it safely. That is the first aspect, and I think the most important aspect. The second aspect, which involves the Department of Agriculture under this bill, would be the enforcement arm; basically, to register the products, to train personnel, to deal with complaints, to recall certain products that potentially are not properly marked, a variety kind of enforcement-type regulations that I think are needed as we address the problem. I know that there is a concern among certain sectors that are going to be impacted by this bill that we are, in some way, not having either, one, enough involvement in the process, and, number two, that all we are going to see are applicators being fined and put out of business or taxed. In fact, that is not the goal of the program at all. Much like we talk about education in this body, when we look at young people, they are all Americans, but, specifically, they are Nebraskans, and the same goes with this issue. We all need water, but this is Nebraska's water. This is water that we drink, that we live with every day, and to protect it I think is not something that is unsensible, and, in fact, I think it is warranted and needed, and, in fact, the standards that are going to come down either by EPA or at some point in time by this body will, in fact, be probably stronger than what this FIFRA program is asking for. But it seems to me a responsible act, we are the only state out of 50 that has not chosen to participate. The debate on this particular program started 18 years ago, 1974, I believe, and I think it is time that we move forward. After nearly 20 years of debate on this issue, and fear of the unknown, I think we are getting some clear answers. I agree with Senator Rogers, not all the answers are that clear yet, but I do think as this bill, if it should move today, hopefully it will bring the parties to the table and discuss how we implement this program, how we are going to make the program work. I feel very confident that we can run a state program in this state that will not penalize or jeopardize the future of Nebraska agriculture and the future of Nebraska chemical dealers or fertilizer dealers here. I think, in fact, we can run a responsible program that will, in fact, protect not only our groundwater...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: ...but our citizens in the state. So I support the committee amendments.