

really happens between now and Final Reading, I have every intent of supporting LB 377 and at this particular time I'm also rising in support of Senator Schrock's amendment. I understand the Revenue Committee's concern and the introducer of the bill's concern as far as putting forth as good a proposal as possible because really what this boils down to being is a budget issue. I don't think we have any choice relative to meeting the state's obligation to this plan that was developed in the past. So as the budget continues to develop and if anybody took the time in the last 24 hours to see the preliminary report that was provided by the Appropriations Committee, would be able to understand that we are involved in a very fluid process and it would seem to me as a suggestion that we might be able to adopt Senator Schrock's amendment to reduce this to a half a cent and then see if we have the discipline the rest of the way to develop a scenario as Senator McKenzie suggested to hold the line, to be able to support the additional General Fund dollars to go along with the half cent checkoff to make this program pay for itself between now and the year 2000. So as a suggestion we can always, it appears to me, reduce this like Senator Schrock would like to do so and if we don't have the discipline later relative to other aspects of the budget, we can increase it back to three-fourths of a cent, so I guess for right now I'd be in favor of lowering it to a half a cent and then when, and I'm certainly not picking on Senator Vrtiska's rural economic development bill, but I'll just toss that one out as a possibility of, since I was not in support of that through the first couple stages of debate, as to saying there's something that just one item of the many items that the A bills that are coming along plus the other things that the Appropriations Committee are deciding and studying, that will eventually come to the floor, we'll have some opportunities to determine whether or not we want to support agriculture in this way by reducing this checkoff amount or maybe leaving it at three-quarters of a cent and doing a couple of other things, so we're in a very...we're in that time period where we have a very fluid process. It appears to me that now might be a good time to lower this to a half a cent and then see what type of discipline we have in the next 60 days. Thank you.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Senator Maurstad. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Bernard-Stevens, members of the Legislature, I feel very strongly that the compromise reached in