

SPEAKER WITHEM: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Preister, followed by Senators Hall, Beutler, Will, and Jones. Senator Preister.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President. Friends all, I rise in support of Senator Beutler's amendment. Unlike Senator Hall, who is feeling good today, I'm not sure I am feeling so good today, and maybe that's why I am going to say some of the things that I am. But I think when we look at the insecticides and the fungicides, and particularly some of the other chemicals and hormone additives, I have some real concerns there, and I think that, as Senator Hudkins says, that we have cheap food, I would suggest that we think about the true cost of our food. We have more chemicals being added to our food supply all the time. Many of those chemicals have been identified as known carcinogens. On the other end, though, we may pay a smaller price for our food, the health care costs that we continue to incur are going up and up, and we're having more of them as people live longer, and the effects of varying cancers are reaching those people in their elderly years. And perhaps a contributor to those costs and to those cancers is certainly the hormone stimulants, the pesticides, the herbicides, the fungicides, and a host of other chemicals that are being added to our food supply. We may not feel the effects of those immediately, but the cumulative effect does catch up to us eventually in many cases, I do believe. I think though our food prices may be cheap, in the long run I think we are paying a very heavy price for that cheap food that is grown in artificial ways. Nature's own way of regulating and controlling itself is to limit species and limit populations. When there are too many migratory water fowl in an area, disease sets in to automatically thin the population out. It is just nature's way of regulating itself and, yet, in factory farming, we put hogs in confinements where they are standing over pits where their own fecal matter and urine continues to collect and then they breathe the ammonia and other fumes from that, whereas at one time they breathed fresh air, they got regular exercise. Those animals weren't subjected to the kinds of mental distress and disorders that then generate hormonal releases that affect the quality of that food. I would like to see, rather than reducing sales tax on some of these chemicals, I'd like to see an increase of tax and then that increased tax actually go to pay the consequences of the use of a lot of these chemicals. So the converse I would like to see. Rather than reducing, I would like to see an increase, not just on these chemicals that are