

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

April 21, 1999 LB 605

objection.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Lieutenant Governor, members of the Legislature, Senator Beutler, I'm please that you have raised this issue. This issue of a mandate on ethanol was certainly discussed in the Natural Resources Committee. You know, Minnesota has a couple of things we don't have. They have a mandate that all of the fuel sold in Minnesota is oxygen blended and they have a pro-wrestler for a Governor. I think the mandate is the better of the two, maybe. I will support a mandate on oxygenated fuels in the state of Nebraska, and it's not popular with my farmer friends. It's not popular with some ag organizations. I don't understand that. I don't understand why...why we produce all this corn in this state and yet farmers will sit around in coffee shops and say how bad ethanol blended fuels are. I've even heard it's bad for boats. I've heard it's bad for lawn mowers. I drove my lawn mower a couple of weekends ago. It's 15 years old and ethanol is the only thing it's seen. So it must work, but it's an issue that needs to be raised. Certainly, when the price of corn gets high, it isn't maybe practical to use ethanol, but we did discuss that in committee. We did advance that bill. Senator Beutler raised a good issue. I think the blame not only lays with farmers, though, I think the blame lies with petroleum marketers. They have not, and I don't think they will, market the ethanol products fairly. There are a few people out there trying but the fact of the matter is when you blend ethanol with unleaded regular gasoline you increase the octane and you have a superior product and so they feel like they need to charge more for it. Also I believe the petroleum industry has a bias against the product because all of a sudden they're selling only 90 percent as much petroleum if it's ethanol blended, so they have less product to sell. And, certainly, some of these large petroleum companies are not interested in selling...in selling, if they can sell a petroleum product that's imported. So I think the petroleum marketers in Nebraska need to start pricing it better, and I think they could, and need to realize that the corn industry is more important to this state than the petroleum industry, disregarding the fact that Senator Baker has some oil production in his legislative district. So Senator Beutler raises a good