

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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the rural sector, but it's a problem of the towns and cities, especially the small towns and cities. And that's one reason, for example, that I've always been in favor of NRDs being one person, one vote in their structural makeup and their election processes, but a majority of them are not, notwithstanding the facts that the small towns and cities have a big stake, a big stake in how the nitrate problem is addressed by the NRDs. So with that, I would offer that amendment and invite your comment.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Schrock, on the Beutler amendment to LB 900.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Senator Beutler...or, Lieutenant Governor Maurstad, Senator Beutler, I agree with you on this issue. And were you to bring that to a vote, I would have supported you. But let me say this, it would probably have slowed the process down of moving LB 900. I don't know why, but the fertilizer tax has become a hot button for our farm organizations and for their members. To me it seems like the money is going to an appropriate place. And several of us from the ag community in the Legislature met in the Governor's basement, in December, and I said, you know, this is one thing we have to do this session, we have to address the Clean Water Fund that is administered by the Natural Resources Commission. That funding has got to be restored. And I think most of the rural senators agreed with me, Senator Beutler. There are two bills in Natural Resources Committee that have yet to be heard, and I know Senator Wickersham has at least one bill and a holdover bill from last year. And so I think the level of funding for a clean water program needs to be there, and my challenge to the ag community, if we don't do it for the fertilizer tax, how shall we do it? I think it needs to be addressed this session. And you're right, I think probably most of the problem for nitrates comes from fertilizer. Certainly there can be some livestock waste enter into that also. But most of the problem comes from fertilizer. So I don't know where we're headed with this. I do appreciate you withdrawing it because I think it would slow this bill down, which I consider for the most part noncontroversial. But something needs to be done this session, and the body needs to remind...needs to be reminded of that from time to time. So those of you in the ag community should be thinking about, if not fertilizer tax then what? And it should be done. Thank