

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

March 14, 2000 LB 1348

committee amendments to LB 1348. Those in favor vote aye; those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

ASSISTANT CLERK: 29 ayes, 0 nays on the adoption of the amendment.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: The amendment is agreed to. Mr. Clerk.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Next amendment, Mr. President, from Senator Beutler; this is AM2800. (Legislative Journal page 1033.)

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Beutler, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Members of the Legislature, this is the amendment that will ensure some debate on this bill, I can guarantee you. It's the amendment that's most important to me. It represents something that I believe to be necessary to a balanced look, both at this bill and at everything we're doing with respect to natural resources in the rural areas. This amendment would restore the \$1 per ton fertilizer tax that is being sunsetted, as you may recall, in December of this year. And it would apply the first \$100,000 of that money to this fund that's created by this bill, and the remainder of the money would continue to go to the Natural Resources Enhancement Fund, where it has always gone, for the sole purpose of protecting ground water quality in the rural areas. There was a bill on this, to be honest with you it was trapped and killed by the Revenue Committee. I don't think that's good policy. I don't think the Revenue Committee was facing up to the long-term best interests of the agricultural community or the state of Nebraska generally. And I'm hoping that you have an interest in this amendment and will take a good, honest look at this. A number of years ago, the fertilizer tax was adopted. There's a series of histories related to this that I won't go into, unless somebody else wants to go into them. But at the time that it was created it was created with the idea that those fertilizers and pesticides, fertilizers we're talking about now only, that go into causing principally the nitrate problem in Nebraska, and the nitrate problem in Nebraska, as far as nonpoint source pollution is concerned, is our continuing challenge. We have gotten a handle on, and we're doing well with most other things that I'm conscious of, but we do not yet have a handle on rising