

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

March 14, 2000 LB 1348

bill in committee, and the committee did kill the anhydrous ammonia tax. And I thought it was probably inappropriate for us to advance a bill out of committee, because the Revenue Committee has been handling this issue. Senator Beutler, I commend you for keeping this issue in front of the Legislature. I think the clean water programs are important. I appreciate the fact that the Appropriations Committee has appropriated \$500,000 to continue the program, that's kind of a Band-Aid approach, it gets us into next year's session. But I don't think that's the long-term solution. I'm always puzzled by people who say a deal is a deal, because I don't ever remembering the Legislature doing things in the past that bound future Legislatures what they could or could not do. As far as the fertilizer tax being something that is not affordable by farmers, because of tough economic times, it pales in comparison to what property tax does to the agricultural community. Senator Beutler, I'll vote for this amendment, but I think you should be aware of the fact that it seems like all agricultural organizations out there are opposed to this. But I made a commitment to the NRDs, a long time ago, that I would support a continuation of the fertilizer tax. You're probably battling an uphill battle here. So I think it's a program that should not be discontinued. I appreciate what the Appropriations Committee has done, that gives us a chance to deal with it next year. And I'm not saying that's the solution, but it's a short-term solution. My suspicions are that there's probably not enough votes for this, at this time, but it sure stirs the pot. I'll yield the rest of my time back to the Chair.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Further debate? Senator Beutler, followed by Senator Coordsen, Wickersham, Jones and Preister. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: You know, once again we're starting down the path with this particular kind of activity of general funding. And this year we're doing it because the members of the Appropriations Committee, I'm glad, recognized the importance of what's being done. But you know, we shouldn't be shifting General Funds to this purpose. In almost every other area of regulatory practice with respect to pollution problems, we expect the industry, we expect the industry that's causing the problem to take care of the problem. And that's not happening