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ethanol blend. When I originally brought this bill before the Legislature, my first consideration was seeking a renewable fuel and bolstering the demand for grain. But it also has other positives. It creates rural jobs. I think it's one of the best things we can do in this state for rural jobs. I know there's people in my area talking about ethanol plants, wanting to build ethanol plants in the central part of the state. It is a rural economic development issue I believe also, and it is also an environmental issue. But it's probably natural I would think this way about ethanol, because I'm a farmer, I'm a corn producer. But it does turn out there's more at risk and there's more that comes to play here. At risk is one of our most precious resources, our ground water and the long-term and reliability of a dependable fuel supply for the people in the state of Nebraska. I believe this state is being prudent when it comes to ground water and dealing with future issues. We need to make long-term plans for our energy sufficiency, and we need to make the cautious and thoughtful decisions that will lead to the preservation of our hereto pure and irreplaceable ground water reserves. Several bills were introduced this year to replace our clean water fund that the NRDs are administrating. We do have \$500,000 out of the Appropriations Committee. Of the ten surrounding states, of the states surrounding Nebraska, Nebraska has 66 percent of all the ground water reserves. That means we have two-thirds of the ground water reserves in a 10-state area right here in the state of Nebraska. If you took the ground water in the state of Nebraska and put it on top of the ground, it would cover the state 38 foot deep. I think we should make some decisions that may affect that ground water quality. Historically, we have conceded to the oil companies the right to formulate their fuel mixtures as they have seen fit. I think we have a larger responsibility in this state and we should take a look at that with this bill. I believe Senator Preister has an amendment that will ban the use of MTBE in the state of Nebraska. To our north, South Dakota has limited MTBE in that state; south, Kansas is considering legislation to limit MTBE; and Iowa is going to be considering that also. At a time of escalating oil prices and gasoline prices, I think Nebraskans are asking themselves if there's a better solution. I'd like to give you a little bit of history about ethanol in the state of Nebraska. Senator Schmit, former Senator Schmit, is probably the