

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

March 12, 2003 LB 619

because we needed discussion on the issue. I didn't do it with the purpose of thinking we would probably pass something this year. And the livestock industry has agreed to an interim study to talk about the issue. For the record, we have some of the most stringent livestock waste regulations of any state in the nation. We are doing a good job in Nebraska of regulating our livestock waste, and I think it's appropriate because we have some of the best water resources of any state in the nation. We need to protect our livestock facilities. We need to protect our water resources. I pledge to you that I will do the best I can to bring the ag community together with the Department of Environmental Quality to have some resolution of this issue, but I don't think it's inappropriate for the state to help us with the regulations of our livestock facilities when you consider the value that those livestock facilities contribute to our state. We are having an exodus of swine in this state and we're trying to figure out ways to keep swine in the state. The cattle industry has not been very profitable. We've just gone through a drought, and maybe we have another one on the horizon. If this was a profitable operation, I think we would all gladly pay a little higher fees. And like I said earlier, if we were a tax-friendly state for agriculture to start with, I could be more receptive to this at time. Senator Beutler, I'll pledge to you I'll work on this, this summer, probably not to your satisfaction, but then we never probably get to where either one of us want to be. I just don't think this is neither the time or the place to put this amendment on there, and I strongly urge the body to reject what you're trying to do this morning.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Schrock. Senator Stuhr, on the Beutler amendment.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I just, too, rise in opposition to this amendment. I think that we've had a good discussion. We did have a good discussion in the committee. As Senator Schrock said, we are pledged to continue to study the issue over the summer, but I, too, want to concur that we are one of the very highest property tax states, particularly in this region. Our farmers in our rural economy is suffering greatly, not only because of the drought but there are also a number of other reasons, and I