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FLOOR DEBATE

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August 2005. I would say we probably for sure have two plants, maybe three or four. There's been some groundbreaking ceremonies going on. But getting the financing for these plants and having them on-line come July 1 next year is going to be very difficult. This can be put off till next year. We've done a little checking with the ethanol promotion board. And to my knowledge, we are the only state where producers pay a corn checkoff to support the ethanol program. In other states, the ethanol program is basically supported by and funded with General Funds. We don't know where we're at on this. I think it's early. I don't mind corn checkoff dollars going for ethanol plants. But in the past, we've always had a partner, and that's been the state. This bill does not have a partner. It all falls on the backs of corn farmers. Now, if you want to do some simple math, let's say you're a farmer and you're growing 160 acres of corn on a quarter of land. A half a cent increase on your checkoff, if your corn is making 150 bushels an acre, that's \$125 tax increase on one quarter of land. Now, if we put that on property taxes, farmers would probably drive their tractors around the Capitol and protest. And like I said, I've always been a promoter of ethanol, and I want to do what's right. But I don't think this is necessary. And at this time, we don't have any partner. And certainly it doesn't appear like the OPEC lobby out there wants any Highway Trust Fund money to go into this program. And yes, I call them the OPEC lobby. They'd rather import their oil than use ethanol. And we've never been successful in trying to put incentives in place or mandates in place that our citizens of this state use more ethanol. But apparently this bill would let the backs...would put the burden on the backs of farmers, which I think at this time can ill afford it. So that's why I think it's prudent for us at this time to postpone this discussion until next year. Maybe we can work out something better, where the corn farmers will have a partner in this. And like I said, I think we're the only state where we have a corn checkoff for ethanol production. If this would pass, we would become the highest checkoff state in the nation, and it would be the highest checkoff we've ever had. Even in the past when we've checked off for corn production, it's never been over a penny total for a corn checkoff. So that's why I would ask for you to help me with this bill. Let's move it on till January next year, get another