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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 32

EASE

SPEAKER BROMM: The Chair recognizes Senator Schrock to open on LB 32.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, sorry for the delay. LB 32 is the storm water bill. It's an issue that the Natural Resources Committee has worked on for three years. It has become a contentious issue. As most of you know, I have no personal stake in the matter. I'm just trying to do the right thing. Some view it as a tax increase. Some view it as a mandate. I believe it is a federal mandate, an unfunded federal mandate. Storm water is an issue that a lot of our cities have already dealt with this issue. We have yet to do that in Nebraska. And I believe it is necessary that we do come to terms with our storm water problems in the state of Nebraska, especially in our urban areas. This affects three urban areas: Lincoln and Omaha, and to some small degree South Sioux City. I think LB 32 is necessary. It's an appropriate means of raising funding for storm water drainage. There was a lot of issues concerning...or, a lot of issues concerning this issue as far as agricultural land is concerned. Well, agricultural land is not contributing to the problem, for the most part. I've talked to parties involved, those who are proponents of the this bill, and we have decided to pass over this bill, and it will be put on the agenda again next year. I think probably discussion on this piece of legislation would take a considerable amount of time, as there is considerable opposition to it. My one challenge to those who are opposing this bill is, if this isn't the solution, tell us what the solution is. We are in danger of having lawsuits filed against us, and for this to be a very expensive proposition, if we don't handle it in an orderly manner. So with that, I am willing to meet with any of those opposed to this bill, now or in the interim. And I am willing to take your suggestions on this issue. But I don't think property tax is the way to pay for our storm water problems, because it doesn't represent...it doesn't necessarily represent those who are creating the problem. So if those who are opposed to this have better suggestions, we will listen to it. This bill did advance out of committee, I believe, with seven positive votes. So I