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FLOOR DEBATE

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\$20 million before the program, the checkoff was ceased to be collected, for the flexibility it provides for four plants instead of the two. You have to remember that we're reflecting back trying to rectify and clarify things that we have done with LB 536 and we failed to anticipate there would be so much interest in it. So, hence, the situation we've worked ourselves into, and I certainly support these plants that would like to be built. They, obviously, are not going to make the June 30, 2004 deadline with the plant being constructed on site. I can't support what they're trying to do with the portable still. That's never been the intent of the Legislature. The language in the committee amendment clarifies that. It has to be a constructed plant, not some portable situation where they move a still in, say we produced 8,000 plus gallons, move the still out and build the plant a year from now. As Senator Kremer, someone pointed out it takes a year to build these plants. They are \$45 million plants. The basic 30 million gallon a year plant costs someplace in that range, 40 to 45 million dollars. You can't build them overnight. So what we're doing here with the committee amendment, and then my amendment to the committee amendment because of the work we've done, and I need to clarify to Senator Bourne that when I say "we" I'm talking about the working group. There was, basically, an open invitation to people to come in. There were ethanol board members there, ethanol board staff, many...

PRESIDENT HEINEMAN: One minute.

SENATOR BAKER: ...senators, senator staff, corn growers, sorghum growers, cattlemen, Farm Bureau. There was a whole group of people at each one of these meetings. It was not restricted as to who could come particularly. Just the people interested in the issue and came to work, and when I say "we" I don't know if we ever had a vote, a ballot issue, or a ballot, a vote taken by ballot in the committee. It was a consensus of yes. Because this bill hasn't had a hearing changing the checkoff fees and the other funding mechanisms, we felt it was best to split that off and have a separate bill. And the corn growers and sorghum growers agreed, yes, we would go ahead and allow the corn checkoff to go to three-quarter cent per bushel and these other issues in order to clarify the whole process.