

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

January 20, 2004 LB 479

checkoff tax on sorghum, and then he also strikes Section 8, which is the language that says that it's the intent of the Legislature to appropriate a certain amount of money out of the General Fund to the ethanol or the EPIC Fund. I agree with that. I think we should strike the checkoff tax because there is not consensus on that, and I do think we should strike the General Fund obligation because of our significant budget problem. I don't agree with Senator Baker's amendment to the committee amendment as it relates to using Nebraska labor to build these plants. And, specifically, here's the provision I'm talking about. It's on page 9 and it says: To qualify for credits under this section, an ethanol producer shall provide public notice for bids before entering into any contract for the construction of a new ethanol facility. What's happening now, as I understand it, in the industry is that individuals from outside of Nebraska are coming in to build these plants. They don't even allow Nebraska contractors to bid on doing the work. They bring in their own people, and they leave Nebraska workers out in the cold. Now if we're talking about 20 or 30 million dollars over 20 years, don't you think it's important that Nebraska people at least have the opportunity to bid on building these plants? I think that is fundamental. Now Senator Baker or Senator Kremer mentioned that this can't be retroactive. They are right. I don't intend for anyone to rescind any contracts, but I do think on a going forward basis if an individual wants to build a facility here, wants to qualify for credits, they should have to at least give Nebraskans the opportunity to build these plants. And, again, it takes several hundred people to build these plants over a period of 12 to 18 months, but as I understand it, it's a minimal number of people that is required to run the facility. So when you look at 150, 200 people that are going to be employed for...

SENATOR CUDABACK PRESIDING

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BOURNE: ...18 months versus 20 people that are going to be employed forever, you can see how important the building of these facilities are, and we should not preclude Nebraska people from building them, and that's what's going on. Nebraskans