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FLOOR DEBATE

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As you remember, three years ago, Senator Dierks' bill, LB 536, was my priority bill that year, and the first plant that came on board after that bill was passed happened to be in my district. And I can tell you it's one of the best things that we have going for us in rural Nebraska right now is ethanol production. I would like to clarify a couple things. We've talked about the huge amounts of state money that go into this, and it is a large amount of money. It is a very large amount of money, but the vast majority of that money is paid for by farmers themselves. The farmers pay for that with the checkoff dollars. So we need to clarify that. The \$1.5 million dollars a year at this point comes out of the General Fund and that's enough for, what, two plants, I believe, but the vast majority of that money is from the farmers' checkoff dollars. I was visiting with some farmers two weekends ago back in Wausa and they were telling me that the price of corn was considerably higher because of that plant. It provides 30 new jobs so we definitely need to keep ethanol incentives going. We've had strong rural and urban support. Our urban senators have supported us very well with this issue and we need to keep that up. I agree with Senator Bourne. I don't think it was the intent of the legislation to have portable stills. I would agree with that and I don't know whether Senator Schmit, or ex-Senator Schmit was promoting that or not, but one thing in defense of Senator Schmit, and I would tell you that many, many times he has talked to me about the need to do exactly what Senator Bourne is saying, we need to give Nebraska workers the chance to work on these plants. That is only fair and only right. The legislation does not say they need to get the bid. They just need to have the chance to get the bid. So I support Senator Bourne on that issue all of the way. Ex-Senator Schmit has pushed that. I have stood up in front of ethanol builders and told them you need to give these people the chance. You know, when you give...leave the money in Nebraska, that money will recycle three to seven times, three to seven times. When the money goes to an out-of-state person, all that stays here is the labor. The rest is gone. It never comes back. So I do support them 100 percent. I do thank the urban senators that have stuck with us through all of this, many times I hear people back in outstate Nebraska, they talk about a rural and urban split. I don't think we have a rural and urban split nearly as much as we have rural senators that can't agree with