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LB 962

And I'm not saying that I oppose the bill. I'm not saying I support it. I just say that...

SPEAKER BROMM: One minute.

SENATOR MINES: ...there's time to be taken to consider, is this...is another \$4 million project truly necessary? Can we afford it? Should we afford it? Probably. But can we afford it? I don't know yet. So with that, Mr. Speaker, have the rest of my time.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Mines. Senator Schrock.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Senator Mines, I must respond a little bit. Yes, this bill is necessary. I suppose we could go home without a bill, and then we could drill more wells and get in deeper. Senator Beutler is correct. This should have been addressed some years ago, but it wasn't. And we didn't have the political will to do it. I understand that. For what it's worth, I've paid a political price for this bill already. I've paid a heavy political price for this bill. Senator Mines, if you would take your thoughts and look at me a little bit here. If it wasn't for the irrigated farms that grow the corn, we wouldn't need that ethanol plant in Blair, Nebraska. And I'm not picking on you, but I think that's something you consider. And so yes, I think it's a very important bill. To me, it's the bill...it's "the" bill for the Natural Resources Committee this year. We have another one that Senator Burling has prioritized that deals with animal livestock waste, and that's something we need to do to conform with the EPA, the federal statutes. We probably need to pass that bill too. But thankfully, we are pretty much up to speed on regulating the animal waste in this state. So this is just conforming it to a federal issue. And there again, there's going to be a fee there that we haven't had in the past, that farmers are not going to like. But I think water is real important. There was no intention of leaving the municipalities out. There were five members from municipalities on this task force, including the cities of Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island, some of the larger ones. So we hope there was a balance. But there was an effort to put people on it that consume, that