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LB 962

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Well,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Wehrbein, do you...?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: ...I'd have to collect my thoughts here on that. But as...my first blush is, yes, I'm generally opposed to going anywhere else. There may be something that I could perceive as fair, Senator Beutler. But, by and large, the consumer, in all the instances that you named, eventually pay for those costs, whether it's banking, insurance or other things, because all those things are passed on. And whatever you would have in mind here for the agriculture side, that ends at the consumer there too. And so it's...there's no way of passing it on, and so that's the reason that I...and I think, you know, we've gotten away from the fact, where does our food supply come from? And you might say we've got plenty of food, and we might say that in just a few short years we're going to importing a lot of our food. I'm nervous about that too. But I think that water ought to be a General Fund issue, in general.

SENATOR BEUTLER: But if farm costs didn't get passed on, how do you absorb increases in fertilizers and other such things? I mean, I think they do get passed on, do they not?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: No, we cut our margin.

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Pardon me?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Well, our margins are cut. That's why you see huge farms trying to survive, because a small farm can't pass those costs on and there's no margin left to live on, on a small operation. So now you live, instead of having a 50-cent profit in a bushel of corn, we're down to...we can potentially down to 10 cents. And so what do you do? You raise more corn, more acres, so that you have more 10 cent. It's...it cuts the margins. That's like...like we talked in committee yesterday on disposable income. We've got, you know, there's only so much disposable income, so now we're spending it for healthcare