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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR SCHIMEK:      Yes, thank you. Mr. President and members, the object of this amendment is to focus us on the zoning process versus the DEQ process, and maybe I shouldn't say "versus," but in its compatibility with the DEQ process. And I don't know how many of you remember, but several years back there was a concerted effort on this floor to make certain that every county had the opportunity to put local zoning regulations into place, because there was some hysteria at that time about counties being very vulnerable to some of these operations that wanted to move into their counties, and they had nothing in statute and, of course...or nothing in their local ordinances. And, of course, at that time we said, well, you've had a long time to do this; why haven't you done it? And at that point they said, we didn't see the need before. So what we did--and this was several years, maybe three years ago--is we put a process in place which allowed them to put some temporary zoning into place and to work on their zoning process. And I believe the implicit promise at that time was that, yes, if you wish to regulate what goes into your county, then you need to put your local zoning into place. And that is something that the Legislature is advocating and has advocated. Well, what this amendment really attempts to do is to give the local zoning process more of a role. And there are really two provisions. One of the provisions in the amendment gives the county an extra 30 days to address these zoning requests. Right now, as the bill is, it has--or the amendment, whichever--it has 30 days for the county to do this. And as Senator McDonald said to me earlier this morning, well, that's fine, except that, you know, when you have public hearing notices that are necessary, and you have weekly newspapers, that really probably isn't enough time. Because if you want to publish in a weekly newspaper, generally, if it's going to be published on Tuesday, you have to have that in at least by Friday of the previous week. Then it doesn't come out till Thursday. So you've got a whole week right now. Plus, then you need the week for the public notice, and that doesn't give the counties much time in which to continue. So what we're doing in this amendment is giving them another 30 days. They could ask for a temporary extension, or an extension, I should say, to address these applications. The second thing that the amendment does is that it makes certain