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FLOOR DEBATE

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lot of risk. And as our age of the average farmer and rancher gets older, they say, I'm quitting, there's nobody else in my family to take it; and the younger ones are saying, I don't want the risk and I don't want to go through all the costs. And one thing I remember is...when I was running for the Legislature, hearing from most people say, cut down the regulations we have and the costs of regulations, and it seems like we just keep doing more all the time. When the discussion came up that what really brought about LB 916 was...and I was in some of the meetings, is what should we do? The federal EPA has come down with more stringent rules. We're not relaxing rules. They're more stringent on the smaller operations, I believe. We're not relaxing them. And when they came down with the rules, they said, okay, do we have to get a permit for EPA and a permit from DEQ, or do we try to harmonize them together...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR KREMER: ...so it would be more...more feasible and more...less costly to DEQ and to the operators? And we felt that it made a lot of sense that the best thing would do to try to harmonize rules and to make it work. The fees right now, many of the farm groups came in and said, well, we really don't like the increase but we're willing to go to the 20 percent, because that's kind of where the standard was many years ago, and we know it's fallen behind that. We think it's a compromise, that generating the 20 percent is something that we'd support. I cannot support going higher than that. As has been mentioned before, we cannot pass it on, and the costs of doing business are just increasing over and over again, and we're not...and so many times we're thinking of only the big operations. I'm thinking of the small ones, because that's who's quitting. And when we do that, this is the food producers of our state, and as we take out many of the smaller operators I think we're going to see the cost of food going up. And somebody that can...a big corporation can...may be already doing these things and already...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you.