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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 1065

sold in the state of Nebraska. It's the broadest base tax that we have, the LUST tax. We channel that .3 cent a gallon on gasoline through the LUST Fund. We also increase the tax .1 cent a gallon on all nongasoline products, meaning diesel fuel, and that covers everyone, whether they're used in a reefer on a truck, at the railroad, irrigation engines, all that. That raises over \$3 million and that, we'll go back and discuss that in a bit on the other handout that I have. Controversial? Yes. Room for flexibility? I don't know. It does fund the other two plants that have come on-line we did not anticipate when we passed LB 536. They have signed contracts with the state of Nebraska that we must fulfill. I don't think there's any question but what we have to fulfill those contracts for the four plants. The bigger issue possibly hanging over this Legislature now is, what about the plants that are anticipating putting a still in? They have to make that a permanent part of the plant if they should expand it. I want to stress the positive here. We need to build some additional ethanol plants in the state of Nebraska; however, I'm encouraging the three groups of people in my district to take a deep breath and stand back and look at what they're doing. They need a good business plan and, in all honesty, they need to get the permits in hand. One of the three in my district has an air quality construction permit issued a long time ago, and we need to take a hard look at what it is they're proposing to do. I don't want to see people in my district put hard-earned cash into a venture that has no business plan. It's not been well thought through. They're going to say, well, we have a business plan. I don't think they have their air quality construction permits. They don't realize the time frame involved in that. They don't recognize the costs involved. But I will be more than welcome to work with people across the state to try and go ahead and get these...an additional program put in place. We could stand back and take a hard look at what they're doing. One of my replies is, if this was such a good idea, why didn't they build the plants, quite frankly? This June 30, 2004, deadline did not pop up out of the woodwork at the last minute. On the other hand, they're trying to qualify at the eleventh hour and the fifty-ninth minute with some, what they're calling, research and development or stills, I guess, what...best word I can think of. But there is life after LB 536. I'm sure people are out there