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LB 1065

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Vrtiska and Wehrbein. The next speaker is Senator Chambers, followed by Senators Kremer, Louden, and Baker.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President...Madam President, members of the Legislature, I agree with Senator Vrtiska. Obviously, I agree with Senator Wehrbein. It's not as though you're going to say, have a corn checkoff, and the money is spent in Omaha, the money is spent in Lincoln. It goes right into the area where the corn is grown. It goes into these plants which are going to consume corn and benefit the corn growers. They can foot this relatively modest amount, and probably more. And the time to do it would be to go ahead and put that amount that is needed on right now. Don't do it in increments. Do it now, and people get used to it, and they keep on pushing. But in taking a step at a time and doing things incrementally, perhaps the way Senator Wehrbein is presenting it to us is the only way we feasibly can do it this session. But I do not think that it is appropriate to raise the gas tax for ethanol. You would have the highway lobby screaming if we said that we're going to take whatever the increase that will wind up in this bill, if there's enough un wisdom to do so, we're going to take that amount out of the Highway Trust Fund. Then you would have them screaming. They want their money, as though it is, quote, their, unquote, money in a proprietary sense. The money belongs to the public. They don't feel that way. They have a powerful lobby, so they get their way. There is no powerful lobby on this floor for the ordinary people who are being gouged, in my opinion, right now by these excessively high gasoline prices. Various attorneys general, including Nebraska's, I think, and others in law enforcement, are asking the public to notify them if they see sudden, unreasonable spikes in the cost of gasoline at the pump. I'm going to support Senator Wehrbein's amendment. I would like to ask him a question. I'd like to ask Senator Wehrbein a question.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Senator Wehrbein, would you respond, please?

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Yes.