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FLOOR DEBATE

April 5, 2004            LB 1065

average cost was only 1.8 cents a gallon less than no-lead gasoline, but it still provided an annual savings of \$6.57 million. Those are some of the reasons that we thought that the general motoring public could step up to the plate, help out the funding of EPIC, and thereby fund the four plants that are out there that will be producing. So in that regard, I have to rise in opposition to Senator Wehrbein's amendment. I understand what he's doing. I...you know, he may...we'll how the vote comes out here. Where we go from there is yet to be decided, I guess. But I'm concerned that, yes, we do need to share in this, these benefits. That means we share in the cost of funding the EPIC program through a fuel tax. And it's a minimal tax, .3 cent a gallon. Yes, it's hard for me to do that, because it's taking fuel tax in what I would consider generally, you know, should be used for road construction. Folks, this is a different situation. We need to get this funded somehow or other, and it is a means to share the burden. So I will respectfully vote no on Senator Wehrbein's amendment. Thank you.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Senator Baker. Senator Wehrbein, you're next to speak.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Madam President, members. I punched in originally to withdraw the amendment, but I am not going to withdraw the amendment. I'm going to let it go to a vote. I...whatever happens, happens. That's okay. I'm not married to this. I thought it was a reasonable way. In fact, I have been sitting here thinking whether I was going to vote with LB 1065 as it is without my amendment. And I guess I understand there's going to be opposition to LB 1065 with my amendment. I think I'll be just as stubborn on LB 1065 without my amendment. I think 1 cent, 1 cent per bushel for ethanol in Nebraska is not unreasonable. And I don't believe I'm going to vote for LB 1065 if it's not amended. I just can't see that 1 cent is that unreasonable. And I may be driving a wedge between me and agriculture. I don't know. But I think a .5 cent increase in the checkoff, going to a full cent checkoff to help ourselves in these times is not unreasonable. And I think that LB 1065 as it's done...I know I was part of the discussion all fall trying to find a source of revenue for this. But when I...when we were