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FLOOR DEBATE

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to concur with Senator Wehrbein. I was actually on the Ethanol Authority Board back in the early or the late...the early eighties, I guess it was when I was on there. The work that they do to support not only the production but the consumption of ethanol here in the state is renowned across the nation. The amount of work that we get done for this small amount of money, the majority of it comes from now the ethanol producers, the off-road tax refund that we take a portion of. Now the majority of that doesn't come from off-road vehicles, it comes from denaturing of ethanol at ethanol plants. The gasoline that they purchase to denature ethanol is the majority of the nonroad use. They pay the tax and then when they apply for the refund, and that money goes to the fund that funds the Ethanol Board. This has not had a hearing. They do good work. I would oppose the Raikes amendment.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Connealy. Senator Schimek, on the Raikes amendment.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Yes, thank you, Mr. President and members. I...I don't know if I'm going to support this, Senator Raikes, or not. I think you've raised some good questions, and it's a distinct possibility in my mind that we should be doing this, particularly when I look at other agencies such as the Women's Commission, which we're no longer funding at all and which has no other visible means of support like the Ethanol Board would have. There would be other ways that we...they could be funded. But I guess the first two parts of it makes sense in a lot of ways, but I would be concerned about the third part and something that Senator Wehrbein said resonated with me on that because I don't know that I really know what the Ethanol Board does really and truly, and whether having the Ethanol Board funded by the industry itself would present any kind of problem, Senator Raikes, in administering the funds and so forth. So maybe I could ask you if you would just tell me that this wouldn't run into a situation like we have with the Environmental Board that we recently had, where somebody from one of the industries being regulated then has perhaps a conflict by serving on that board. I don't think that would be the case here, but could you just expound a little for me?