

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
Transcriber's Office  
FLOOR DEBATE

April 13, 2004 LB 1065

one way or the other. But it is a question of how you use the money. The point was made, well, a lot of the tax refund gas comes from ethanol plants. Fine. But it does come to the state through a checkoff or a tax imposed, and it is money available that the state can legitimately use, in my opinion--I don't see why not--to fund the EPIC program. Why not use it for that? It...again, I see no problem with that. The other thing is if you look at comparable commodity groups, if you will, if you want...and I know ethanol is in some sense an unusual commodity, but all the other commodity groups, as far as I know, are not funded with state monies. They are funded with industry money. And again, the door is wide open for this...for the Ethanol Board to fund their administrative unit through programs of support from the ethanol industry. And of course, it's becoming a bigger industry in the state. There are more and more plants. I don't think it's an unusual obligation to place on those plants, and in particular the activities of the administrative unit may be more appropriately directed if they are, in fact, under the direction of industry groups or are funded by people in the industry. And again, that's the way I am used to seeing their function now. They act as advocates on ethanol incentive bills. They don't have a regulatory or a referee-type function. They fit very well, in my estimation, the model of a group that should be funded by industry support. And again, this is a modest proposal. They would be funded as they currently are until the end of the current calendar year. They've got \$400,000 in the bank which would take them clear through the end of 2005. So they wouldn't need to think about any additional funding until the year 2006. How many other state agencies have you treated so well? I think none. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Senator Baker, on the Raikes amendment to the Baker amendment.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members. I...once again, Senator Raikes is way out in front of the pack leading us, but I'm going to vote red on this amendment. I'm...and it's not that I don't agree with what he's trying to do. I...back to Senator Wehrbein's concerns, it's the fifty-eighth day, no hearing. These are good people over there, there's no question about it. But I want to look at their