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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, Senator Louden and I discussed this idea that I have. If you all will make the counties responsible, and you will take the money out of the Rural Development Cash Fund, you're through with me on this bill. If the county does it, the county will contract with somebody, maybe the USDA, or some expert who will know how to get rid of these animals without harming the rest of the environment, not using poisons that may seep into the ground water, not poisons that may affect other animals. But look what you all are doing with the bill as it's written. I started talking about it yesterday, and I'll talk about it more as the afternoon wears on. The county has the responsibility, not the state, because wild animals belong to the state. The state can make the county responsible for this. The state can delegate duties and requirements to the counties, and let them be the ones to do this managing, as it's called euphemistically. If you are barely scratching out a living on your farm, and you have debts already, and you get a notice from the county that if you don't get this program underway and get rid of these groundhogs...these prairie dogs, the county is going to do it and we're going to assess your property. And somebody may not know how to do this, and they will either not respond at all, or tell the county they will have to do it, because I, the individual landowner, have no idea how to go about this. So the assessment is made. The prairie dogs stay. And another assessment is made. And pretty soon, this person has additional debt on the farm. You all talk about being against raising the property tax, when it is not going to be as hard a hit as what this program will be on the individual landowner. But you don't care. I do. Now, there's one landowner that I'm not worried about, because I think that one can take care of itself. I'd like to ask Senator Louden a question.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Louden, would you yield to a question from Senator Chambers?

SENATOR LOUDEN: Yes, of course.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Senator Louden, this bill includes the federal government as a landowner, doesn't it?