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corn checkoff from additional increases. I probably...I'll probably vote yes on Senator Connealy's amendment, because I do think that it brings on some of my rural colleagues. But I would urge you to really consider AM1631. Let's fund this program entirely today. Let's get it done. Let's send a message that we are an ethanol state. Let's adequately fund it today. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Bourne. We're discussing the Connealy amendment. Senator Smith, followed by Senator Loudon and seven others.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I appreciate Senator Bourne's terminology as Nebraska being an ethanol state. That is very important. As we travel the ethanol journey, I guess, it's been interesting over the last several years the various proposals that we've had regarding ethanol. Some of them have been mandates at the pump; some of them haven't been. But I think the incentive issue is good. The corn checkoff component is one that I'm uncomfortable with. That's why I'm inclined to support Senator Connealy's effort. I harken back to last year, when there was an attempt, that almost stuck, to double the corn checkoff, to try to bail us out of a situation that we found ourselves in. And I'm not out here to be critical. But I think too often we get so anxious on the corn checkoff to carry things forward, when there are a lot more folks that benefit from ethanol production, whether it's the consumer, or whether it is the corn producer, cattle feeder, and so many others. So I think to continue to fund it with corn checkoff only, or a lot of it out of corn checkoff, is troublesome. As we look at moving forward, I think it's important. Senator Fischer, I think, spoke very well on some feelings that I certainly have, as well, about the statewide approach. I've been supportive of ethanol incentives, even though ethanol plants haven't reached the Panhandle yet. That does concern me. We came very close, but it didn't happen. I think some of the bureaucracy prevented it from happening, perhaps not intentionally. But nonetheless, it was unfortunate, because we don't have ethanol production in the Panhandle of Nebraska. That is very concerning to me. I am especially apprehensive when we move forward with policies that kind of