

lead agency is the way that we need to go with FIFRA in this state and it allows us to utilize all the expertise that we have in this area of...in Nebraska because all of the different agencies have different expertise in different areas, this allows us to have the Department of Agriculture very involved in this process because they do have a certain amount of expertise that we do need to use. So I rise in opposition to the amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Speaker Baack. Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Madam President and members of the body, I, too, rise in opposition to the amendment. You know, there's never been a question in my mind that the lead agency for this piece of legislation should be the Department of Agriculture. We have...over my brief years in veterinary practice, I have had the opportunity to watch the inspection service that comes from the Department of Agriculture and they do a credible job. It isn't like we're starting them from scratch. They know what they have to do and they do it very well. I am sure that the Department of Environmental Quality would have good inspectors also. I think it's important to remember that even though the NRDs...or that the chemigation may be under the auspices of the Department of Environmental Quality, the NRDs do the inspection. I don't look for that to change because they're the ones that are out there, they have the expertise, they have hands on experience. They touch these things yearly. They understand what's needed and they know how to do it and I don't look for that to change. But it isn't the DEQ that does it, it's the NRDs that do it. The degree of flexibility that Senator Beutler talks about, I think we've had that. I think if you would see what's happened in the negotiation process to get this bill before you, you would understand the degree of flexibility that's prevailed to allow this to come to fruition here today. The people who are citizens who have been involved with this and who have testified in favor of it, Senator Beutler, are the Nebraska Citizen Action, Nebraska Audubon Council, the Lincoln Lancaster County Health Department, even the Sierra Club has other years testified in favor of this legislation. They didn't happen to at this particular hearing. So there's been input from metropolitan areas. There's been input from citizen action groups and there's a consensus that we're on the right track and this is the way that the bill ought to be directed. I see no reason for us to make this change right now. I think if that happened, you would see a fallout of support from all of the ag