

Madam President.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Bromm. Senator Hohenstein.

SENATOR HOHENSTEIN: Madam Chairman, members of the body, I had an opportunity after the debate on the first reading to discuss this bill with the Department of Agriculture. They came in in Appropriations and, although that's not really our purpose, we did have a chance to ask them some questions about their handling and their administration of FIFRA. And I guess I was a little skeptical and I listened carefully on the first reading to the debate and especially Senator Beutler's concerns and I listened again to his concerns and he talks about how there would have to be a collaborative effort and coordination and the only place to put it is DEC (sic), and I'm, frankly, convinced after listening to the Department of Agriculture that they are confident that they can handle this, they will handle this. They've made it especially clear that no matter where you put it, if you put it under DEQ or the Department of Agriculture, or the Department of Water Resources, no matter where you put it, because of the system we have set up in the State of Nebraska, there has to be a collaborative effort. Whatever agency has it is going to have to deal with a number of other agencies, especially with the water issues. That is not going to change, whether you put it under DEQ or the Department of Agriculture. And the Department of Agriculture indicated their commitment to the collaboration, to sharing of information, to working closely with all of the agencies particularly involved in the enforcement of FIFRA. And, frankly, they convinced me that they will do this, that they're going to be honest and forthright in how they manage it and they're going to work very closely with the agencies, particularly DEQ, which they know they have to work closely with to make sure that the administration of this act is handled efficiently and properly. I don't think it's fair or really a solution to say that if we put it under DEQ, we will not have any of these problems. And, frankly, we will, no matter where you put it you're going to have to have a collaborative effort. There is clearly going to have to be a collaborative effort because of the interwoven pattern of agencies that are now involved in the administration of these sorts of issues. It's going to happen no matter where you put it. I, frankly, agree with Senator Baack that this is probably the place to put it this year. If, in fact, it is not put here, it may not be put anywhere, it may not happen. And I support the act and I support having the Department of Agriculture