

SENATOR BROMM: Madam President, I think there's an amendment being drafted. And while that amendment is being completed, I would just like to generally discuss some of the reasons why this bill came about in the first place and what the general purpose of the bill is. I think the issue here is that may have been lost in all of the discussion and amendments last couple of days is whether or not Nebraska, as a state, on a local level, should assume responsibility for the training and certification of...of the applicators and users of pesticides, and whether or not we should exercise all those authorities that the EPA has been exercising within the State of Nebraska. Why would we want to do that when the EPA has been doing it, presumably at no cost to the State of Nebraska. Well, I think the answer is that the...the situation, if a problem develops, and the way the EPA would handle that problem is much different than it would be if the State of Nebraska were handling the problem themselves. I also think that the...that the ability of Nebraska to implement an education and training and certification program is much greater than the EPA. The EPA had three people to take care of the entire State of Nebraska. And with the amount of pesticides and chemicals that we apply in the state, and the various applicators we have, whether it be lawn care, whether it be aerial applicators, whether it be farmers themselves, or commercial fertilizer applicators, three people to implement a program of training, certification and so forth, and monitoring, is just not adequate. Therefore I think it's imperative that Nebraska assume responsibility for the program. There hasn't been much said about it, but with this program there also will be federal funds available for our integrated ground water management program, hopefully a federal grant, that we would not have available to us otherwise. And that's something we probably missed out in the past by not having this program in place earlier. However, I think there still is time to take advantage of those federal funds. With that, Madam President, I just want to encourage the body to continue to move forward on the bill. I think if we do have an amendment here that does what it sounded like Senator Ashford said he was going to do with it, that that will be something that will be probably generally acceptable as far as I'm concerned. I think that it is important that we do try to gather the support of...of those people who are concerned about the urban interests, the environmental interests as they relate to the bill. And hopefully this amendment will do that. Thank you, Madam President.