

provided much greater benefit than the price paid through the fertilizer tax, but now even that part of the deal is being reneged on by the ag interests. And again, in my view, if we do that, we should revisit the issue of the sales tax exemption on farm machinery. It hasn't been but a year or two that we...the ink isn't even dry on that compromise when the compromise is blown up in a sense. Now the repeal of fertilizer tax is delayed and it won't happen till later but again, my position is that we had resolved that issue and now it's back again and in contrast to what we had agreed to a few years ago. In terms of the Civic Auditorium issue in Omaha, what I understand this bill to do is to have the state fund a good portion of the Civic Auditorium renovation. Now that's a city, basically a city auditorium, not that different than Pershing Auditorium. Pershing Auditorium was renovated by the City of Lincoln through bond issuances that were voted on by the people of Lincoln, paid for by the people of Lincoln and of course others outside of Lincoln utilize it but essentially it is a city auditorium. I think the Civic Auditorium in Omaha is no different than that. So what are we doing? We're helping the City of Omaha, that's great, but what we should be doing is following up on Senator Ashford's initiative. If the state is to have a role in an auditorium, it ought to be in terms of a convention center. That's where we ought to be doing a partnership. We're doing it backwards. We're helping with the Civic Auditorium side of it, not with the Nebraskaplex complex. Now it's in there as something to be studied and the city and county will be looking at it, but it's not clear to me that that's going to happen at all. And I saw the study that Senator Wickersham put out that Senator Pirsch was involved in that said, you're throwing good money after bad if you renovate the Civic Auditorium. So it doesn't make sense. Now if the City of Omaha had decided to put their own money into Civic Auditorium to fix up and in exchange ask the state to help with a convention center to tie into that Civic Auditorium, I think that's a good idea and if that is what is intended here and that's what will be done, then I appreciate it. But I'm going to ask Senator Ashford, I see his light is on, when he gets up to talk about what is our commitment in terms of the state to the future of a convention center. When we do the Civic Auditorium, are we done? Is the state complete with our fiscal obligation or do we anticipate that the city and county will have a plan and again will have to put more money up to be a partner in an additional expenditure on the convention center? I wouldn't mind so much, again, if we were a partner with the city and county there in the state to do a convention