

April 18, 1979

LB 571

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I can understand the concerns expressed by Senator Dworak. I think that he has raised some very important issues and some important questions that we need to deal with but I still am and will continue to be a supporter of the development of gasohol in the State of Nebraska. I commend the leadership of Senator Schmit in this area. I think he has really taken some courageous steps to try and deal with the problem that I think we all understand and feel and that is the rising cost of gasoline and just all energy costs. This is one attempt on the part of Nebraska to really provide leadership not only in the state but I think nationally. We have seen the inaction and ineptitude of the federal government and I think it is time for the states to take the bull by the horns and meet the problems that we face. I personally think that there are a number of questions that Senator Dworak raised that I still have about gasohol, and the first is that I don't think we need to build thirty million dollar gasohol plants as much as I think we can look toward thirty thousand and such gasohol plants that could be dispersed throughout this state, would be localized, would cut down on the transportation cost of the grain and would I think be a more efficient and effective way to develop gasohol. That is my suggestion that LB 571, if passed, that is how I would like to see it used but that is to be left up by the administration of this program and so that's not a point I want to raise. I still support gasohol. I would like to raise a point though that my idea of how it should be developed may be different than what Senator Schmit's or some other supporters of gasohol would be and that is again that I like the localized, smaller gasohol development projects. I like those better than the large, large scale thirty million dollar plants. But still we need to do something in this area. I want to give for your information some figures about the 1977 Nebraska energy bill. If this state were a household, this is the energy bill we would have to pay, in 1977, that is. For electricity we would pay \$420 million in cost. For natural gas we would pay \$270 million. For coal, \$7 million; for fuel oil, \$80 million; for heating oils, \$123 million; for propane \$82 million and here is the clincher, for gasoline, \$665 million. \$665 million, that is roughly what we paid in 1977 for gasoline in this state. Now the total energy bill for the State of Nebraska is \$1.7 billion. It will go over \$2 billion in 1978. Remember I am using 1977 figures. So we are talking about one third of the energy bill that we spend in this state is for gasoline. We need to do something about the problem that not