

April 1, 1980

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I believe there are some strong preventions in the bill against abuse in that it requires a constitutional three-fifths majority of this Legislature before we would ever do anything and I believe three-fifths of the body could tighten it down to where they would deal on a very limited basis if at all with the procedure. Number two, I see serious problems in the future coming with respect to the rebates we are now giving on gasohol. In other words, the state is subsidizing alcohol gasohol to the tune of fifty cents a gallon and the feds are subsidizing it at forty cents or more. This is going to begin hurting the road funds at some time. The bill does have some provisions which we would be able if we did do any of this bonding to utilize an excise tax and I believe we are going to have to do this and abandon very shortly our policy and the policy that other states have followed...they followed Nebraska, we were the first one, of getting these subsidies in the form of gas tax exemptions. I think this is going to hurt our road program as gasohol may expand. This bill would give us a flexibility to deal with that problem and still provide incentives. Finally, I think the Legislature should be indicating that we are willing to look at new ways to be supporting alcohol or gasohol programs and that is the reason I am supporting this, three major reasons.

PRFSIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I support the motion to return the bill, not necessarily for some of the same reasons that Senator DeCamp has listed. I do not share his concern relative to the loss of revenue for the highway program. I believe that that problem will be dealt with in another manner, and I am sure that by the time that we would ever have an alcohol plant in construction and operation, we are going to be paying a considerably greater amount of money for gasoline and foreign fuels than we are today. I support the idea of returning the bill because I believe the people of the State of Nebraska based upon the contacts I have had with them would overwhelmingly support this constitutional amendment. I agree with Senator DeCamp. I have some problems with some of the wording but I think we should perhaps at least allow for an expression from the people on this issue. I think it is unfortunate that we find ourself in the position where we rely for fifty percent of our petroleum from foreign sources. We have not delegated a sufficient amount of our resources to the development of new types of energy and new sources of energy. I think we are many years behind. I believe we are in a very indefensible position should the Middle East happen