

Appropriations Committee. I serve on three other committees that deliberate and meet and I know the problems that we face when we go into Executive Sessions and I'm sure that the Appropriations Committee has done as good a job as they possibly could, but quite frankly, in my mind it's not enough yet. Senator Warner had some excellent words before we voted on the last motion about avoiding a tax increase. I certainly want to do that, I'm certainly committed to that and I guess I have no alternative but to support Senator Beutler's amendment. We've tried specific cuts on specific programs that have failed. We have tried other motions that have failed and to be honest with you I'm frustrated. I recognize this is maybe not the best or the most rational approach. It may be irresponsible but I don't see any other proposals laying in front of us to be adopted by this body that will cut the budget down to a figure that I hope will be enough to avoid at least a tax increase, but in visiting with a number of members of this Legislature I've come to the conclusion that we are all frustrated. We are all disappointed with what is happening and I think we'd all like nothing better than to avoid a tax increase, but it doesn't seem like we're going to be able to do anything unless we start making some specific cuts and this is the first one that I think we're going to have to make. It's painful. It's not exactly what everybody wants to do, but I think there is no other choice and I'm willing to support it. I supported almost every motion that has been placed before us to cut back in different areas. I'm not afraid to axe particular programs that I'm a part of, but...or I'm supporting. Whatever it takes I will try and do and I apologize to the Appropriations Committee because I know how diligently they have worked to try and bring this budget to a point where we can support, but it's not there. It's not at a point where I think 25 people agree upon it yet and as much as I recognize that we need to cut, I guess I just don't know what it's going to take for this body to agree and I am not going to throw it on the Governor's lap and let him make the decisions. I don't think that's a wise choice to make. I've heard a lot of speeches on this floor about the economy and about what's happening in this state and certainly agriculture is no different than anyone else. They are hurting. People that I have talked to are extremely concerned about increases in their budgets, increases in their taxes and they certainly don't want to see that happen. So I'm going to take the most conservative, prudent approach possible and I suggest this