

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Senator Vickers, would you like to close on your amendment?

SENATOR VICKERS: Madam Chairman and members, the decision that you are to make I think is fairly clear as to the outcomes of what happens to the noxious weed law. Senator Pirsch, I would like to let you and others know that the amendment that we are discussing is amendment number 1660 that is in your bill book. Amendment number 1660 in your bill book, in front of LB 459 is the amendment that we are discussing. Now, here is the situation. We have got a noxious weed law. The law says we shall control and we all know, I agree with those people that say we are not going to kill every noxious weed in this state. If anybody thinks you are going to eliminate musk thistles, that is like saying you are going to eliminate coyotes. The last two living things on this earth is going to be a musk thistle and a coyote sitting under it and they are going to be howling and laughing at the rest of us as we go off into eternity. I admit that up front. I know it is true. I have been fighting the two of them all my life and will continue to. But the choice is this, we have a law on the books but we don't have the money at the state level to enforce the law. The counties really are not too interested in some cases in enforcing the law. In some cases the counties...and I could name a few counties, and it doesn't necessarily need to be urban counties either, Douglas County has been mentioned, but there is a few others where musk thistles grow like they were the state weed and they don't do anything about it. Now, unless Senator Warner is going to put a lot of money in the appropriations bill for the Department of Agriculture to enforce the noxious weed laws, which I doubt that the Appropriations Committee is going to, or if they are going to be overjoyed with an amendment out here to do it, which I doubt that the Appropriations Committee would do, then we have got a choice. We are either going to have to put in some other mechanism to enforce the noxious weed laws or, in my opinion, we might as well eliminate them, because if you are going to have a state law and then you are going to say on the other hand, but the state doesn't have any funds to enforce the state law, so, counties, you decide whether you want to enforce the state law or not. Now, that is the choice. That is what LB 459 as originally introduced says and that is what it will say if we take the funds away from the Department of