

CLERK: Mr. President, Senator Schmit would move to amend.  
(Read Schmit amendment found on page 1064 of the Journal.)

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Schmit, please.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I want to rise in support of the amendment and in support of the bill. I'd like to speak to you just a little bit about the philosophy that is embodied in LB 474 and the manner in which I believe the bill may affect the financial obligations of this state and this Legislature. We all are well aware of the limitations under which we are operating. And we also are well aware of the limitations under which the agricultural community of this state is operating at the present time, and the ability of the nonagricultural sector to support this kind of a bill. I want to emphasize that soil conservation, groundwater quality, and other environmental issues are very popular at the present time. It always grieves me just a little bit to read reports in the press that the Nebraska Legislature has done nothing to protect soil erosion, to limit soil erosion and to protect groundwater quality and groundwater quantity. That is not true. More than 15 years ago this Legislature placed into position the Department of Environmental Control. We also brought about the natural resources districts, the two entities which now make it possible for us to protect soil and water. I've been a member of this Legislature for a number of years, and I have yet to see this Legislature make a financial commitment that will be necessary to do all of those things which we want to do, and all of those things which are necessary if we are going to protect the soil and the water and to protect the other environmental concerns. Soil conservation is a very expensive process. There is a large amount of land...of tillable land in this state which is subject to erosion. A great percentage of that land is in my legislative district. Some of it is land which I own and operate myself. I want to point out also that much of this land has supported families for 100 years, and has done so well, because of the fact that Senator Sieck has pointed out there are many procedures that you can employ that do reduce erosion, that do make the land more productive, even under some of these adverse conditions. I want to point out also that the federal farm policies of the past 40 years have encouraged and contributed to the fact that we have a major erosion problem. Good conservation practices have been penalized by the federal farm programs. I want to