

one year. And that bothers me somewhat. I felt the 75 percent-25 percent cost share was a fair agreement with farmers or business people or construction people, but I would like to say that if we want to go to 90 percent I'll do whatever 25 people on the floor want to do. But I am only concerned from the standpoint that as you raise that amount up you may then be forced to injure some other parties who may want to utilize the funds if it was just set at 75-25. But I recognize the stress...the financial stress that is going on in the agricultural sector. I would certainly like to work with Senator Schmit in a way in which we could generate additional funds for the conservation program in this state. I think that he has hit the nail right on the head, that we have not made a serious commitment in this area in the past. I think the momentum is building both in this Legislature and outside of it to try and see more attention devoted to the environment, our natural resources and the protection thereof. I would be happy to work with him again, hopefully, next year in trying to get some additional funding put in there, or find a funding mechanism that we can help build this fund up so that we can take steps to protect the environment which, as farmers, we are the direct recipients of the benefits of nature. And I think that we have to make sure and protect that nature and, in this case, try and preserve that topsoil because once it is lost it cannot be replaced. So you can do as you please. I really don't have any strong opinions on what you may want to do. I have some reluctance myself, but if 25 feel that it is appropriate, or the majority in this body feel it is appropriate to raise that cost share up, that is fine. But I'm just fearful that you might cut the money down to a point where you won't get to too many projects if you raise the funding level so high, and a couple of big projects come along, you've used up all the money. Tentatively I think the program is looking around, as Senator Sieck informed me this morning, about \$100,000...

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: ...to go into this fund. And you can imagine a couple of big conservation programs or projects that may be implemented that could cost quite a bit of money and use up the funds rather quickly.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Sieck, please, on the Schmit amendment.