

obligation that we may have. I would say that this is an investment. There are cut-backs in the federal dollars that are being spent that are going to be required. This is an increase in investment. But the problem out there is much larger this year than it even was last year. Think of it as if you were in a position and a person called and needed help. Where would you direct them, a person that was not qualified? You'd direct them to somebody who had expertise in the field. This is the area that needs the funding that we are attempting to supply here. I'm in favor of the amendment, I hope the body is.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Rod Johnson, then Senator Chambers.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. Speaker, members, I was not going to speak, but after listening to Senator Barrett's comments I thought it was important that I did say something positive for the program. As Senator Barrett indicated, the Business and Labor Committee, along with the members of the Ag Committee, did conduct a hearing to listen to the program. And it is a worthwhile program. But what sticks in my gut, more than anything else I guess, is the fact that as Chairman of the Ag Committee, and as I look through the list on the agenda of what we have accomplished for agriculture in this legislative session is practically nothing when you be honest with yourself, take a look at the bills that are progressing through the Legislature, you can talk about the Governor's ag authority, or the Farmstead Act in LB 999, or some others. Those are last resort type measures. But this particular program is at least one that offers some hope to some people who are going through some difficult economic times for a new beginning. And I think it is appropriate that this state offer some type of help to the farmers of this state who are going through or experiencing problems to start a new life somewhere else, outside of the ag sector. We have only a limited amount of dollars. We only have a very limited amount of authority over agriculture, when you stop and really, seriously look at it and analyze the impact that state government has upon ag policies, both in the state and across this nation. So this may be one of the few things that we can hang our hats on this legislative session and say we've done something at least for some people in agriculture. I rapidly see a time coming where those of us in agriculture, and those of you that share the desk in this Legislature, are going to have to make some very difficult, and I think some very serious decisions, because I see that there is only a very small amount of funds available in the ag area. And we're going to have to begin prioritizing who we are going to help, and who we