

SENATOR LABEDZ: I see. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Rod Johnson, please. Then Senator Warner.

SENATOR R. JOHNSON: Mr. President, members, I think there has been some confusion as far as what Senator Haberman's purposes may have been, but from what I can understand he certainly wants to lower the amount of cuts that the Agriculture Department will suffer down to a general 3 percent cut as the other agencies are going to equally take that 3 percent cut and let them make their own decision as far as what programs we may cut out of their budget. The department went through when the request came for a 3 percent cut and as Senator Warner ably explained it, they come up with seven particular programs they said we can do without. And then they went back in and cut out an additional 2.6 percent of programs that they felt, I guess it was another request from the Appropriations Committee to go even deeper in cuts, and after talking to some members of the Appropriations Committee they felt to take the whole 5.6 percent of the cuts for the purpose of making up in some other areas where they may not be able to make a 3 percent across-the-board cut in some programs, that quite frankly couldn't be cut out. So, that is why agriculture or the Department of Agriculture may have suffered a more serious cut than maybe some of the other agencies and programs as we go through them. We have put back in \$50,000 for the Financial Assistance Program. I think that is a good choice this Legislature has made this morning. And if we want to go further than that, I'm certainly in support of that, needless to say, protecting some parochial interests here for the Department of Agriculture. But as I said before this morning, I would certainly be in favor of putting some money into the Predator Control Program which is very important, but we cut out last year. If you want to put it into the particular program for bees or whatever, we can do that and I'm supporting Senator Haberman's approach to lower the amount of the cut that may be suffered by the Department of Agriculture, but I think it was important to note that the department tried to be honest with the Appropriations Committee. They did specify particular areas unlike some agencies and, unfortunately, they just happened to be one of the few that really did that and, unfortunately, got cut and we're going to have to work through that as I'm sure we'll