

Equalization can meet and change. If we are undercollecting by 10 percent, the Board of Equalization can meet and change our numbers. And Senator Warner, I think, quite appropriately has said that trigger is too insensitive, it's too high, it's too low. If it's 90 percent, we could be in some difficulty but, if it's 110 percent, that's probably too insensitive and we're probably overcollecting at that point. I agree with those perceptions. And Senator Warner has suggested that we change these from 10 percent to 2 percent. If we're overcollecting at 102 percent, if we're undercollecting at 98 percent of our needs, the Board of Equalization or the Governor would be free either to call themselves into service or have the Governor call the board into service. My only uncertainty about the measure is that I don't value those two options exactly the same. Of the two, I think undercollecting is the more dangerous situation. It's sensible to move our trigger up from 90 percent of undercollecting to 98 percent of undercollecting. We want to be sure that we don't get too deeply into a hole and have to make some radical change because we have had too insensitive a way of making an appropriate adjustment. On the other hand, the other side of the coin, I don't value quite exactly the same way. If we are collecting at 102 percent, that doesn't bother me nearly so much. We, for example, in our appropriations process keep a 3 percent reserve as a statutory minimum and that statutory minimum has always included the range of from 3 to 7 percent. In other words, overcollecting, or having more money than what we need at one time is not an ill, it is, in the case of appropriations, in fact, very necessary. Now, the gas tax is a different situation. It's not quite the same situation, and the need to have a reserve is not nearly the same. In fact, it's meant to raise just exactly what we need, not more than what we need. But the reason I passed in committee is because I would not think that the overcollecting number should be exactly as the undercollecting number. We should be able to pay our bills, we should be able to build our roads. But I hope that we don't get into such a situation which people start maneuvering for the political virtue of dropping a tax rate, that we hue the line to the very, very minimum necessary to do the job, and then produce a very highly fluctuating gas tax in which people are calling the board into session to drop it what basically might be 1 percent or 2 percent for political advantage and to get some good ink in the press. I'd just as soon have us, if we are overcollecting, have it be a range in which we could make sensible, long-term changes in our gas tax rather than advocating a too frequent or too quickly fluctuating oscillation