

required to be contributed by the producer, that stays essentially the same in the area of 28, 29, \$30 million. There is no change over the life of the bill in what the producer is expected to contribute. But what it does do is to reduce for now, and we can change it in the future, but it reduces for now the public contribution, essentially, to the project from \$28 million, which is the scale of the subsidy here insofar as it is coming out of General Funds, it's reducing that portion from \$28 million to \$12 million. Now once you do that, then the total funding for the fund becomes \$12 million out of General Funds, it becomes approximately \$30 million out of the producer excise tax, and then there is the remaining \$28 million from the gas tax which is in the fund in either case. So the total amount of funds that would go into this fund would be about \$70 million. Now remember, the range of funds that are anticipated is some place between 45 and \$85 million. This bill reduces the total amount of money currently appropriated and makes these people come back to the Legislature in two or three years in the event that the producer tax is not enough in conjunction with the General Funds and look at this thing again. So it reduces, in terms of Senator Wehrbein's amendment as compared to this amendment, it reduces the total overall funding from about \$90 million to \$70 million which I think is probably more realistic anyway in terms of what the likely amount needed is. And if you're looking at in terms of the percentage of General Fund dollars going into it, it would reduce the General Fund dollars from about 50 percent of the total funding to about 30 percent or 33 percent of the total funding in that area. So what I am suggesting to you with this amendment is not that we do not subsidize in a very meaningful way what's going on, but that we take a more conservative look at it, that we do not reach out and do the whole thing at once for the seven years, but rather take a more conservative approach, fund it well for a couple of years, see what's there, come back, see if we need to do more. That's the overall effect of the amendment. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Cudaback, your light is next. Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker and members of the body, I'm going to oppose this amendment mainly because we have figured this very carefully. I appreciate what Senator Beutler is trying to do and I'd like to do it if I thought we really could, but we have figured this several ways over the last year