

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

February 22, 2000 LB 717

SENATOR CROSBY: Senator Preister.

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Honorable President. Yes, I would respond. Senator Wehrbein, these are in all different counties. I believe about 60 percent of them are transportation spills related. They are air releases, water releases, ground releases. I can't say the percentage of agricultural chemicals. I don't know the percentage breakdown. These are all releases that have met at least the threshold limit of volume and quantity and there were only four sta...four counties in the entire state that did not have those. There are a host of different kinds of hazardous materials and I don't know the percentage breakdown of agricultural chemicals.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Okay, thank you. Well, I will say what bothers me the most is a little bit of what Senator Beutler was saying, and I guess I need, would like to have an answer. I don't mind so much the \$150,000 for three years in itself. Perhaps that's a state obligation. What does bother me is the money is going to be released to county general, so, apparently counties do not feel that it's a serious enough problem for them to expend any money at this point, even knowing they are going to get some or all of the money back. And then I look in the future as outlined here that once the local communities are brought into the process it will facilitate local efforts to seek donations from area businesses and to identify other funding sources, such as a fee-based system. And it looks like it puts us on the hook into the future perhaps. Even after we spend this, we don't get the money back, the money goes back to the counties so the state is out the 150. Now maybe we have an obligation to do this, and I guess that's where I would like to ask to have Senator Schimek's response to the committee amendments on this, but is it...would it be serious in looking at then a fee system into the future? I really can't imagine local businesses wanting to donate to this area. I assume a lot of this came out in your committee hearings and I would like to hear some of that comment on that before committing the state to what I think probably is a long-term funding of these local efforts, Local Emergency Planning Committees. Now I understand the hazards out there but I guess I'd appreciate comment, and I know I'm going to run out of time, but I guess I'd like to ask Senator Schimek's response from the committee hearing.