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FLOOR DEBATE

April 5, 2001 LB 657

of them fire/life and safety issues, some of them less serious, but those accumulate to the tune of 200...about \$256 million. Now, when you start talking about \$256 million, you're well beyond a 2-cent argument. But the \$256 million are the state needs. The 2-cent needs are those expressed in the bill. Now, if we're going to fund the 2-cent needs, why don't we be honest about it? Why don't we just take the 2 cents out of the General Fund so that we can meet the \$256 million of needs that we have for the state in another program? Why bother the \$256 million program for a 2-cent project? And I do think that the way the bill is structured is not entirely candid, because if the proponents suggest that over in another process we're going to add \$3 million that makes the program that meets those \$256 million worth of needs whole, they must be doing that with at least a little bit of doubt because they know that, for example, if revenues are reduced when we get the April 20th forecast that any bets about adding \$3 million to the 309 Fund are off. And so the net in the 309 Fund won't be zero; won't be at half million dollar plus. The result in the 309 Fund will be \$2.5 million less than what we expected when the prior earmark expires. So why not just admit it? Why not just admit it and take 2 cents of cigarette tax out of the General Fund allocation, leave 309 alone, and be honest with people about what we're doing?

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Wickersham. Question is the adoption of AM1289 to LB 657. Those in favor vote aye; those opposed vote nay. You're voting on the Wickersham amendment. Do you wish to be recognized, Senator Wickersham?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Mr. President, I would ask for a call of the house.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: The question is, shall the house go under call? Those in favor vote aye; those opposed vote nay. Mr. Clerk, please record.

CLERK: 14 ayes, 0 nays, Mr. President, to place the house under call.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: The house is under call. Would