

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
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FLOOR DEBATE

March 27, 2006 LB 962
 LR 259

SENATOR CUDABACK: It is withdrawn.

CLERK: Senator Schrock would then offer AM2627. (Legislative Journal page 977.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Schrock, to open on AM2627.

SENATOR SCHROCK: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, this is a straightforward amendment. This amendment would protect the Environmental Trust from being used for purposes other than those for which it was intended. The amendment requires that all funds be distributed exclusively through a competitive grant process, for the purpose of conserving, enhancing, and restoring the natural, physical, and biological environment of Nebraska and related administrative costs. The Water Policy Task Force, rather than take money statutorily from the Environmental Trust, was instructed to apply for a grant for funds with its cost. The task force went through the competitive grant process to obtain funds to begin its work, and it was awarded \$350,000. On the contrary, we took money--raided it, if you want to say--for LB 962, which is something I didn't want to do, but we needed the money, and you know how the Legislature is. When we need the money, we look for a place to take it and we take it from the Environmental Trust, and it wasn't intended for that, I don't believe. I have two handouts that you are receiving. One is a letter to the editor from Ben Nelson, who was Governor of the state of Nebraska, and he's the one who is probably responsible for us voting on and passing the lottery in this state. And the other is a survey, and it appears to me like most of the people in the state strongly agree that they voted for the lottery because the money was going for education and the environment, and that's pretty overwhelming. I'm not going to go through the numbers, I'm not going to take a lot of your time this afternoon, but 55 percent strongly agree that the voters were told that half the money was going to protect the environment, and they don't think we should break that promise. It gets even higher than that when you include those that strongly agree. So I think the public supports this, and those of you who are in rural Nebraska, who may disagree with this, I will tell you that a lot of money has