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FLOOR DEBATE

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think (laugh).

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: (Laugh) I rise to...I'm going to oppose Senator Smith's amendment. And I will say that into the future, if this becomes a General Fund obligation, which I assume there's probably somewhat risk, if not a high risk, then probably that will come upon the oversight of the Appropriations Committee and maybe another committee, Government Affairs or others. But at this time there still looks like there's going to be an increasing flow of money coming from the federal government from homeland security. And I think we all take that very seriously. I just see that the Department of Agriculture announced today in the Plattsmouth...in the Lincoln paper a hiring of a medical person in charge of homeland security. It was done on a federal grant. I don't know whether that came through the Ag's budget, but anyway I think there is an obligation and a responsibility of this body as another branch of government to be aware of, if not have some advice or some position of responsibility to look into these. And taking this formal process away that we've envisioned in LB 940 I think is a mistake. And so I oppose the amendment.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of the Smith amendment, Senator Brown.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President and members of the Legislature, I just wanted to rise to agree with Senator Wehrbein that most of us would believe that \$79 million is a great deal of money. And the money issue I think is critical, but I think that there's also a policy issue that we all need to be aware of. Primarily the way that the homeland security funding has worked, and I'm setting aside a little bit the concern about the...at some point in time assuming the cost in the future, but looking at the policy implications. Pretty much the way that it's operated so far has been that the state serves as a pass-through to the local level. One of the things that we found out when we were struggling with how to structure the statewide...well, how to look at funding, but also structure of the statewide communications network, SCAN, for emergency communication amongst first responders, was that some...a lot of communities