

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I personally had some problems with the bill dealing with the percentages that are set to pay for these railroad crossing safety improvements that we are discussing under this matter, but I felt that the bill had a lot of merits and I thought Senator Cullan had done a good job in amending it through the committee and that basically it was a step in the right direction in dealing with a very serious problem in the state. However, the discussion that has gone on on the floor indicates to me that there is some concerns about who is paying for the problem and the correction of that problem. My feeling is that it would not be unfair or unreasonable to change some of the figures that we have in the bill at the present time. Now what my amendment would do would be to change... We just adopted the committee amendments which changed the state percentage on the cost involved, 80% to 87½%. My amendments would return back to 80%, the amount of state tax dollars that would go into any railroad crossing improvement so that we wouldn't increase any state tax dollars which sounds reasonable to me. I always like to do that. It would also cut back the local governments cost involved from 10% down to 5%. So we would cut in half the amount of money that local tax dollars would have to pay to improve our railroad crossings and that has been the brunt of the problem right now, so I think that would deal with that situation. It would also increase, and this is the other part of the bill that will reach some opposition, and that is to increase the railroad's share from 10% to 15%, the cost involved, that they would have to pick up. Now I find that it is only reasonable that we request this sort of involvement by railroads. From the discussion in the committee 15% was not unusual for a state to demand of a railroad to invest in railroad traffic safety. So it is not out of line, I don't think, and I would suggest that you carefully consider that amendment, but because of the discussion involved and the time involved, I'm going to ask that that motion be withdrawn and have it inserted in the Journal and have it considered on Select File so I withdraw my motion to amend.

SPEAKER MARVEL: Senator Wesely asks unanimous consent that the amendments be withdrawn and inserted in the Journal. Is there any objection? So ordered. Senator Cullan, are you ready to move LB 42 to E & R for review, as amended?

SENATOR CULLAN: Yes, Mr. President.