

CLERK: Next amendment, Mr. President, Senator Scofield, AM1596. (See page 2041 of the Legislative Journal.)

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Scofield.

SENATOR SCOFIELD: Thank you. This amendment, I brought this so that it addresses specifically the concerns in the articles that you have before you on the potential impact of this process with small towns. The page number that I cited earlier, if I can step over here and find that for a moment, my concern with this issue all along has been that there may not really be adequate opportunity here to use this mechanism to address the problems of the communities that have the biggest need for assistance and, again, I would refer you to the lovely article, "Effluent, not Affluent" which I have starred on page 742, which talks about, again, the history of this whole issue, and would quote a portion of that, which talks about the ups and downs of the wastewater treatment program and the uncertainty of future federal funding, which says, that is not good news for communities that must comply with federal water treatment requirements and a myriad of other environmental mandates, that according to a September, 1988, EPA study, could cost the average household an additional \$100 per year by 1996. The cumulative cost could be greater for municipalities with fewer than 2,500 residents, fewer than 2,500 residents. I read this to you because that is the group of people that I am trying to help out here, although we make it even smaller than that. The studies predicted that small town user charges and fees could rise by \$170 per household. And here is the one I think is important in terms of the observation of this article, and one of the reasons why I have had so many concerns about LB 311. And, again, I am quoting from page 742 of this National Journal article. "Large communities will be able to go to the bond market for the cash they need to build and replace treatment plants, but small communities may have to rely on the state revolving loan program." We do have some funding in the budget that addresses this problem, but I think given the current mechanism under 311, I am not convinced that there is really much there that can be done to help small communities. And so having said that, now I will get into AM1596, which was done with, again, the advice of our research office and the Department of Environmental Control. The purpose of this amendment is to make money available to small communities who are unable to afford loans even with a discounted interest rate, and so it says the state will make available up to \$300,000 for