

Highway Fund has been stripped from the bill, but on the funding aspect, if this bill would pass...to begin with, could this bill pass as is right now, and what would happen if it did?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Excuse me, if we were on Final Reading?

SENATOR MOORE: Yes.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Okay, if we were on Final Reading, it would put into place the tools that we could use to negotiate with...continue to negotiate with the C&NW or any other rail line that said they were going to abandon trackage. There would be a council established. It would have eight members appointed by the Governor, subject to approval by the Legislature. We would have had an evaluation of the proposed abandonment by a division in the Department of Roads, and by the Director of that division. We would have had an evaluation both by the council and by the director as to whether or not we had internal funds to undertake the project and whether it was viable. And, incidentally, that might be a project that would simply involve the revitalization of a line, and if a revitalization of a line is involved, there is specific standards in the bill for the council and the director to consider.

SENATOR MOORE: Okay.

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: So there are fairly strict standards in the bill and there are two funding mechanisms in the bill. One is a cash fund and one is a revolving fund which would intend to be set up to deal with problems on an ongoing basis.

SENATOR MOORE: Well, the revolving fund, I would guess...where would the cash fund monies come from in the bill?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: The cash fund would have to be an appropriation from the Legislature.

SENATOR MOORE: Okay. The thrust of my question is, I mean what sort of potential General Fund impact does this bill have as we sit right now? Obviously, it is at the discretion of what at sometime we appropriate, but I just am trying to decipher if I vote yes on this bill, does that mean the possibility for a large scale appropriation from the state, and give the authority to do so?