

separately.

SENATOR WESELY: Okay.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you. Mr. Speaker, members, again, this takes a number of cleanup legislation, brought to us by the Health Department, and makes some adjustments I'll work through and explain here in just a couple of seconds. First, there's a bill, 703 had a companion bill, 702, that was advanced by the Health and Human Services Committee that made a number of changes in the fees and Cash Funds for the Health Department. That bill had no opposition to it and was advanced unanimously by the committee. This amendment would incorporate those provisions into LB 703. The Cash Fund issue is one, a number of Cash Funds are now scattered across the Department of Health, they would be consolidated into a single agency Cash Fund, but would be accounted for in a fashion that we could still track through the Cash Funds and know from whence they came and to where they go. But there's an accounting savings, evidently, in administrative costs that the Department of Health would like to achieve from this change. And so that's one of the elements of this amendment. The fees, there are a range of fees set for various health care practitioners that are in statute. The Health Department then assesses the health care practitioners, based on the cost of regulating the practitioners, it's to cover the costs of the department for that regulation. They have asked us to make adjustments in those fees, in the range. The fees are not set by the Legislature, the range is set by the Legislature. Then the Health Department must determine the cost regulation, then assess the level of fees to accomplish covering the cost of that regulation. So that is also again a part of 702 and included in this amendment. We had, speaking of the fee situation, another element of this amendment deals with a group called sanitarians. Sanitarians are individuals that work with environmental health issues. They can inspect and find if there are problems with drinking water, or waste water, or other type...or any type of situation that poses a health risk of an environmental nature. Those individuals have been termed sanitarians. There aren't very many of them in the state, and they have faced some fee increases, under LB 539, I introduced. At the hearing it became clear that there was strong opposition to the fee increase and the alternative offered at the hearing was to change the name of the sanitarians to a term better