

mentions that the Cash Reserve Fund is down to \$19 million but he also mentioned that we have this budget reserve of 3 percent, and you know that that 3 percent is there to take care of these cash flow problems, among other things, and it does that. I don't believe we dip into the Cash Reserve Fund just for cash flow problems. That's taken care of under our budgeting procedure. So the money is available. The money is there and here's an opportunity to help the State of Nebraska, to take some of the load off those highways that is going to be on those highways if this line is abandoned. And this is not a branch line. This is not a branch line. This is much different than any other abandonment that we have had in the State of Nebraska. This is a main line. This is a main line practically from one side of the state to the other. It's important to the economy of that part of the state and to the economy as a whole. I hope you will vote for Senator Wickersham's amendment.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Lamb. Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Mr. Speaker, members of the body, I'm, of course, standing in support of this amendment. A large share of this abandonment procedure goes through my district and it is so vital for the economic viability of our...of our whole area of north central Nebraska. I don't know if people understand what's going to happen to the highways in our state, especially along the north side of Nebraska with this abandonment of this track, but the cost will be far in excess of the 5 million we're asking for to bring this to fruition here today. If you would look at the center of your map at Ord, Nebraska which is in the center of Valley County, grain trailers from South Dakota are loading grain on a railroad at Ord, Nebraska daily, throughout the year. Those are trucks that are traveling over Highway 281 from O'Neill south and they come every day, numerous trucks. Those highways are under duress right now and they would come to the Chicago Northwestern but they won't provide the cars. We have a difficulty with they have been trying to downgrade this track for years and they won't even provide the service to us. Now when we had a meeting at Valentine last summer, we had a group of people from South Dakota down to help with the...with the effort to save the line, that entire two counties on the southern side of South Dakota, two tiers of counties are supportive of our efforts to keep this line open. They use the line to ship grain and they will use it more if the facility is made attractive and available for them. So it isn't just for us, it's for rural development across a great part of the Great