

September 28, 1992 LB 11

worthwhile cause, but when we're making the type of budget reductions that we are making, I think it is only right that this body also not dismantle MIRF but simply take a piece of that away like we have so many other things in the last 18 months in the State of Nebraska. That is simply my opening. I think maybe another Appropriations Committee member can talk about some of our concerns about this is basically money that goes out. There is a statute in LB 11 which you could probably read which talks about infrastructure. I think it's good to have a discussion on what those who supported MIRF, which I did not, meant by infrastructure. Obviously, infrastructure, you think of sewers; roads and bridges that were absolutely disallowed under MIRF. It's infrastructure needs. There are a lot of things that money is being spent for that's very good, but certainly a question can be asked, is it actually going for the infrastructure that this body intended? And that's the other concern this body had and maybe that's an issue that's better focused in the regular session if you want to change the actual language in the bill itself. But I think, as we have done with a variety of other things, I think it is time to look closely at MIRF and understand that this body made commitments in 1989 without raising the cigarette tax, without raising the cigarette tax and we made promises then that we can no longer fund and that cigarette tax could certainly go for other things in state government, not that it's not going for good things right now, but simply the time has come where we can no longer look the other way. We're talking about tightening our belt and we need to review all those decisions we made in the late eighties. This is certainly one of them. I ask for the body's advancement of the bill.

PRESIDENT MOUL: Thank you, Senator Moore. Senator Ashford, followed by Senators Landis, Schmit, and Hefner.

SENATOR ASHFORD: Thank you, Madam President, and members, very briefly. I did not vote for this cut in the Appropriations Committee and I don't intend to vote for it now. My reasoning is twofold. First of all, this cut would take effect starting in the next biennium. There is no current cut out of MIRF funding for this year which gives us an opportunity next year to revisit the MIRF issue. Senator Moore brought up a good point and that is the definition of or how we define eligibility for MIRF. I think we need to revisit that, take a look at whether or not it's too expansive, whether or not the money is being adequately directed to needed projects. So that's a good point