

Fund, that, and since they gravitate through the Highway Trust Fund, that the Department of Revenue has the authority under the process determined in this section of statute to provide for increased fuel...rather than saying fuel tax, as a tax on fuel to make up the difference so that there would not be a reduction in the Highway Trust Fund. Is that an accurate statement, Senator Warner? That is an accurate statement, so all of this talk about protecting the state General Fund is, in fact, not entirely accurate because there is a self-sustaining mechanism built into statute that protects the Highway Trust Fund, provides for revenue in the event that there's not revenue available from other sources, not revenue available from other sources to fund the credits that are provided for in the statutory authorization for the EPIC Fund of those businesses that have signed the contract and qualify for it. So I think before we get too far afield with concerns over possible budget exposures, General Fund and all of this thing, that we get back to the basics of this, the basics of 377. The basics would say this was determined by the Legislature as being an obligation of the State of Nebraska. This mechanism was put in place to protect the Highway Trust Fund. It provides for basically a surcharge on motor fuels in the event that there is a shortfall. So we're not creating some horrendously disastrous situation here. What we have, and I've got to get back to this, is a situation where voluntarily, through the good auspices of Senator McKenzie, production agriculture has stepped to the forefront and said we will take from the citizens of Nebraska what we believe to be our fair share when measured against the benefits. Now when we get to "rizzle" drizzle whining over where it's coming from, maybe we ought to make sure we know how the process works. Now I do not believe that we even need to make...

SENATOR HALL: One minute.

SENATOR COORDSEN: ...this decision on this, whether we want to, we can if we want to. If we want to take it from General Fund revenues, that's fine, but we're not going to be taking it at some future time from the Highway Trust Fund. That's taken care of. I think we need to get back to where we all understand what it is we're talking about, we understand that we have a mechanism in place that is going to carry out the process unless we do something differently. Agriculture has volunteered to contribute additional resources out of their own pockets. Thank you.