

several funding mechanisms.

SENATOR COORDSEN: Okay. Thank you for your response. Thank you, Madam President.

SENATOR CROSBY: Thank you, Senator Coordsen. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Crosby, members of the Legislature, I would like to speak against the Vrtiska amendment. First of all, I would note for you that the Game and Parks Commission had asked for \$150,000 to maintain this 321-mile trail and so what the Appropriations Committee has granted is one-half of that particular amount. I'm sorry that Senator Vrtiska feels that in his personal exchanges with Game and Parks that things were misrepresented to him. I want to make clear to you that things, as far as the Legislature were concerned, were never misrepresented. This was the fiscal note on LB 739 which we adopted that picked up the Cowboy Trail and in there Game and Parks and the fiscal staff of our Legislature indicated that the maintenance cost would be an estimated low of 100,000 a year to an estimated high of 360,000 a year, depending on what was done with the line and how it was developed. And then going further back in the fiscal note, there are some different scenarios played out depending on what was developed and what was left into habitat and what was leased out to ranchers to use, and they all varied between \$138,000 a year to \$243,000 a year. Now, in fact, they're going to get that trail maintenance cost much lower than that because, one, at a certain point in time user fees will kick in which will drop that overall cost. Two, they are working on developing leases on certain huge segments of the line which will feed back in rentals, which will develop lower operation costs. They're working on the development of other types of utility leases and that sort of thing. So I think that the overall operating cost of the cowboy line is going to be very low, actually, in terms of any state funds that are needed. But, in any event, what is even being asked for now at the beginning is far below what was estimated and Game and Parks, I think, has done a good job of making use of the funds they have to maintain what they have and to start out. They're starting out now from Norfolk to Neligh and then up in the Valentine area actually doing some repair and development of bridges. The incredible bridge across the Niobrara at Valentine is being developed now. Some very scenic aspects of that line, of that trail are going to be in use before very much longer and I think at a very low cost. So, considering what you've done to