

PRESIDENT ROBAK: LB 544 passes. LB 552.

ASSISTANT CLERK: Madam President, Senator Beutler would move to return the bill for specific amendment. The amendment is AM2321. I believe copies have been distributed, Senator?

SENATOR BEUTLER: Copies have been distributed. We may have been one or two copies short in the back of the room, but they are coming presently. Madam President and members of the Legislature, I'm real happy to report that on the matter of who should own the land with respect to our low-level nuclear waste, we've had a kind of raging controversy going on about that for some time and the Governor's Office has been negotiating with the utilities. There have been probably a dozen exchanges over the period of two or three months and I'm real happy to report that finally they have reached a compromise that seems to satisfy everybody and I was very anxious to get it passed this year because on the question of low-level nuclear waste we will have other questions coming up, difficult questions that we need to resolve next year and it's good to put this one behind us. Essentially, what the controversy was is that under the current law it was required that the state, if a license, if a facility is licensed, the state should own the property from the time .from the very beginning of the operation on through forever, and the Governor and others wanted to switch that ownership for a variety of reasons, to the operators and/or utilities. So what this amendment does, which is in front of you, it represents a compromise and basically the operator of the facility will own the land during the life of the facility and until closure is approved, and then thereafter, after the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Health have both approved the closure, then thereafter the state will own the land. And so that's essentially the basis of the compromise. You will see on page 11, with respect to the turning over of the property to the state, both the Department of Health and Department of Environmental Quality have to make certain determinations shown at the top of page 12, and if the operator meets all those qualifications, then they will turn the prop...then the state will accept the property. So the Governor's Office, I can't say that they like this, but they're content with it and I would say exactly the same thing about the utilities. No one's...it's a...no one considers this a totally win situation for them. On the other hand, I consider it a win/win situation for the state in resolving the matter in a way that I think makes a lot of sense for a number of reasons. I