

April 27th, there was an amendment attached which was resisted by a few members of the body, which basically took the money from the weatherization program and plugged it into this school technology fund as well. And, at that point, I didn't, I guess, appreciate the significance of that amendment or that move or maybe give it enough thought or study to realize that this was a fairly major decision. And it was kind of by accident after that that I got back into being interested in this subject and if you will bear with me just a minute, within the last month or month and a half many of you may have noticed we have a crisis in DEQ with a lack of funds for the leaky underground storage tank program. There were something like 600 or 700 clean-up projects shut down across the state. I visited with a 67-year-old filling station owner in my town when I gassed up this morning who has put \$25,000 of his own money into his clean-up of his station and hopes he would get it in a position where he could sell it and retire and now the state has shut down the project after he puts in his 25,000, and who knows when it will be completed as far as the clean-up. Be that as it may, I was looking around for possible money that we could provide injection into the LUST Fund, and it occurred to me or became apparent to me that the money in this weatherization fund is...is oil severance tax, originally. It was placed in there in the eighties when we had the crisis. So that's the origin of the money. Now that got me to looking at the statutes surrounding the school weatherization fund and looking at the fund in more detail and asking questions and it was only after I did that that I...that it dawned on me and I realized that the Legislature, by its own decision, has empowered and instructed the research division to do a program evaluation of the school weatherization fund, and I think this is fairly significant. That evaluation is in progress right now. The report from that evaluation is due June 15, 1995, about two weeks from now, and after we have instructed a serious evaluation of a fund and a program, we have chosen, on a Select File amendment, to not wait for that report or what the prognosis of that fund might be, not wait for the results of what that program has done or hasn't done or what the future weatherization projects envisioned for this fund might be across the state, what the needs might be, what the return on that money that's in that fund has been and might be in the future. Without waiting for that, we have chosen to do what I think was done with good intentions but done in haste and that is to say we're going to simply divert that fund, that it's 1996 sunset, into this school technology fund. Now there are other problems perhaps but that's the big one for