

Vrtiska. Senator, I have AM3726, I have a note you want to withdraw that amendment. Senator Vrtiska would move to amend, Mr. President, with AM3739. (Amendment may be found on pages 1175-77 of the Legislative Journal.)

SENATOR COORDSEN: Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Senator Coordsen, members of the body. I'd like to take just a minute to explain...explain the amendments and the changes that are made. I think each of you have a copy of it on your desk. The first amendment makes changes in the definition section of the bill and the changes as you have in front of you. Amendment separates the definition of "disaster" from the definition of "catastrophic financial emergency". The definition of disaster remains just as it was written in Senator Chambers amendment adopted on General File. The amendment redefines catastrophic financial emergency in several ways. The first is by redefining the term as a state of emergency within a local government caused by certain expenses of government as opposed to defining it as the expense themselves. The amendment removes the term "abnormal expenses" from the bill. Instead, the amended definition of a "catastrophic financial emergency" refers to the expenses of government which "are beyond the local government's ability to pay for". The amendment removes the term "legal mandates" from the bill. Instead, the amendment refers to expenses which "are incurred as a result of activities the cost of which are required by state statute to be paid for by the local government". The amendment clarifies that expenses related to a disaster are unreimbursed expenses, and that the disaster qualifies the local government for federal assistance. Moving on to the second part, the amendments make changes in the allowable uses section of the bill. In subsection...in Section 1, subsection (3), the bill discusses the circumstances for local government claim against the fund. The second circumstance currently allows financial relief in the form of grants or loans to permit the normal transaction of essential business and to provide for the continuation of essential services. The amendment changes the word...the use of grants and loans to permit local governments to pay for expenses relating to or resulting from catastrophic financial emergencies. Senator Chambers expressed some...when we were on General File about what the term "essential business" and "essential services" means. And so in this change of the