

you may recall, in the spring of 1995 the LUST Trust Fund became insolvent and in April a letter went out shutting down about 700 cleanup projects that were in process around the state. This caused a great deal of problems for people, not only from an environmental standpoint shutting down cleanups of potentially dangerous environmental situations, but it also left people who had performed work and expected to be paid without any payment. In some cases, that caused businesses to be stressed financially and, as we heard in hearings that followed that, perhaps in some cases it caused some people to go out of business. And many of those bills that were incurred prior to that shutdown are still unpaid. And I've handed out to you a list of those pending applications that are unpaid which is a separate handout listing many, many different users of or applicants of monies for reimbursement and it's about \$10 million and there's about 6.3 million of that remaining to be paid that has been approved for payment by the Department of Environmental Quality. In getting into this legislation, we wanted to incorporate recommendations done by Senator Warner's committee, Program Evaluation Committee, which I...there are some compliments that need to be paid here to people and I don't want to forget that, not the least of which is the Program Evaluation Committee's work that they did in evaluating this fund. Ironically, they had started doing that, I believe prior to the shutdown of project work, and they continued it through the summer and last fall issued a report; and some of this legislation that's in 1226 comes out of the recommendations of that report and it was very helpful in focusing on some areas that needed attention. Some other people, certainly Senator Beutler and his staff, the DEQ and their staff have been extremely cooperative and willing to work with us and someone who I didn't know until I got into this in depth had been greatly responsible for having this legislation on the books that initiated this whole area of cleanup, Senator Landis. And we had some tough problems to try to work out here and Senator Landis certainly came in and gave us some suggestions on how we might consider approaching the solutions. To hit some of the high points, in order to pay these back bills of six point some million that are sitting there we either had to take monies out of the fund as taxes come in each month from the gas tax and let people wait for months, if not years, or we had to figure out another way to do it. As we were in the process of looking at the alternatives, the DEQ and others, including League of Municipalities and municipal parties of the state who are interested in this fund, we came up