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LB 878

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. President, members. As I said earlier, I was going to oppose this particular amendment. First of all, the one that...the range we have now is out by Pioneer's Park, in Lincoln. Department of Corrections has known for a while that they have some problems out there and should and will eventually close that. So part of the reason that this is in the budget for the Tecumseh facility is the planning that they anticipated would have to take place and move it. So this is for the corrections, and this would be for their officers, although they can be shared with other units across the state, if need be. But this is primarily for Department of Corrections. But the big issue is the safety issue that now is out by Pioneer's Park. And, as you know, there's...I...I'm...I'm speaking a little bit off the cuff, but I think you'd recognize that firing safety today is a bigger issue than it's ever been. And I think it would behoove them to move to a safer area. I can't comment on \$950,000 for a firing range. It does seem like a lot of money. On the other hand, if you want one that's safe and has many of the needs that we have today in today's society, I would assume that many of that...much of that is definitely needed. They do have problems out at Pioneer's Park with safety, an occasional stray, ricochets and that type of thing. There is a development continuing around that, and so it is a safety issue that I think we ought to be in a position to solve. It seems like to me Tecumseh would be the logical one. The current range has no electricity, no running water, severely limits training and eliminates the ability to conduct critical night-time and mobile target firing classes. I was going to comment on...but Senator Pedersen did make the remark that they recognize the need for the training, and so I won't go into that. But it would appear to me that accuracy of fire, in cases of the needs that may happen, is probably the biggest safety factor as anything, in other words that you're accurate in what you do and takes less ammunition to do what is necessary to be done. The current location also restricts the use of chemical agents. The department has a critical need for chemical agent training for its Emergency Response Teams. The current site was built with no bullet trap and presents significant cleanup issues. And so, even though I recognize the need...the interest in saving this money, you should know that the cost of construction for the new