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FLOOR DEBATE

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Information Technology Fund, the 309 Fund only had 5 cents, and so the 5 cents of the previous amount is what was in legislation. During the special session, 2 cents was restored to the 309 Fund when the cigarette tax was increased, so now it's back to its 1996 level of 7 cents. And what this says is now that we're going forward and extending the cigarette tax, it will be the 7 cents as it was in 1996, and so the hold harmless should also reflect the 7 cents instead of five-sevenths, which is the 5 cents. So what this amendment does is put into effect the hold harmless language for the new 2 cents that's going to be extended further with this bill. It treats it the same as the Game and Parks money, as the cancer research money, as the original 5 cents Building Renewal Fund money, just making that consistent so that it...that the 309...and I apologize for always saying that, that was was the name of the bill at the time...but so that the Task Force on Building Renewal Fund from this source then is treated...the first 5 cents and the second 2 cents are treated the same in terms of hold harmless, as was originally intended in 1996, and with the hold harmless language that was passed in 1997. The 309 Committee, as you know, the Building Maintenance Committee, is looking at a tremendous amount of need within building maintenance. This is a core function of state government. It is our responsibility to maintain the buildings. The money goes for repair, fire/life safety, ADA, and energy improvements. Currently, in total, there are \$382,482,619 worth of needs in the state to our buildings. The class I, which is the critical level, has over \$100 million in needs, so this won't get us all the way there. It will get us a little bit of the way there, with a few more dollars to be able to address to these critical needs, and it uses the...and it will then treat all 7 cents of the money that goes for building maintenance in the same fashion and as the other earmarks are treated. And that's the essence of this and I hope you will support it. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Thompson. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of the Thompson amendment, AM1448, to the first component of the divided committee amendments. Senator Vrtiska.

SENATOR VRTISKA: Thank you, Mr. President. Members of the