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FLOOR DEBATE

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LB 440

commitment prior to the 2009, when it runs out anyway. Now that's the issue, as I see it. I'm going to support Senator Beutler's amendment, once again, because I think it keeps faith with what we said we would do. They are...what Lincoln is doing is by law, which originally I didn't think it was, but it is. We've allowed them to bond against it, so let's let them keep that. Two more years, we can decide whether or not we need to continue the funding...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: ...or not.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion. Senator Mines.

SENATOR MINES: Thank you, Mr. President. Colleagues, I stand in support of Senator Beutler's amendment, AM1661, and here's why. He made one little mention of a shift from aid to local property taxes, and that in fact is what would happen if this amendment were not passed. Just to give you a little history of what's happened to municipal aid, in 2001, in October 2001, the special session, municipalities' aid was cut 4 percent. In 2002, during the regular session, aid was cut 21 percent. Additionally, the municipal share of the \$14.5 million from the Highway Trust Fund, that half-cent sales tax on motor vehicles, was also reduced, and that's LB 1085. The proposed cuts this year on municipalities is 32 percent and that's the \$3 million, plus 10 percent cut, and the...plus, we haven't even talked about the municipal's share of the \$22.5 million from the Highway Trust Fund. This...we talked earlier this morning in a meeting, and I appreciate Senator Thompson and Beutler's time, and there are different perspectives, but I think if we do honor what was promised, you know, Lincoln certainly has pledged their faith and good will to the MIRF funds, as have other cities in the state. I tried checking with the city of Blair. I know we have pledged our funds. I don't know if they're directly bonded or not. I will find out. Here's what I see happening, is we have capped the amount of property tax that municipalities can raise. We've also capped spending. Now we are cutting state aid that was designated to offset those caps and, I'll be very