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LB 407

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, when Senator Schrock developed this idea, he asked if I would be interested in it and I said my reaction was, yes, I would like to support reducing the cut to the university. And I was later then reminded that we did have this agreement we made this morning that I had been involved in and worked with people on, and there was some discussion as to what the dimensions of the agreement were. Were we all agreeing that this would be the final piece on...the basic final piece on LB 407 and nobody would make more cuts and nobody would push for more increases? And I think we all decided it was a little bit fuzzy. But to the extent that I can honor an agreement and do away with the fuzzy, I want to do that, and so I want to stick with the agreement that we had this morning, and I need to apologize to Senator Schrock for indicating that I could support this. Because, given that situation, I don't feel that I can support it. I'm assuming that means, though, that this matter moves forward without further cuts too, and that basically LB 407 is a settled matter, at least so far as those people who are involved in that agreement this morning. Having said that, let me say basically why I thought Senator Schrock's idea was a very good one and not...and not jeopardizing the Highway Trust Fund. The Appropriations Committee and the Governor listened to the Roads Department and their request to construct a \$6 million...at least \$6 million would come out of their funds to construct an operations shed, maintenance shed/operations center. That was disapproved by the Governor and it was disapproved by the Appropriations Committee, and that \$6 million then was transferred over to the construction fund and was obviously money that the Roads Department was not counting upon for construction of roads, because they had planned it for the construction of this operations center, which isn't going to happen. And so that money is clearly available and not designated for a purpose, and for those who feel like they would like to support a strong university, it seemed like a logical trade-off to take that \$6 million and mitigate the cut to the university, and I think that's what Senator Schrock was thinking of and I think it's a good idea, but I just can't participate in it. Thank you.