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LB 408

SENATOR LOUDEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I too would oppose this amendment. The way I understand it, it would be a 10 percent cut. And it's to the Roads operation Cash Fund. And Senator Thompson went through this one list of here, the safety. And that's on there. And part of that, you got to remember, are...if we start working and cut our operations and that sort of thing, the first thing we know, are we going to paint the edge of the roads? That's the one of the big safety factors we have. What about in the wintertime, ploughing snow? You get storms. Are you going to run snow crews out through the night through the various hours to hunt up people that are probably stranded out on the roads? All of these are safety factors, and all of these cost a lot of money to operate. Not just our construction part, but just plainly to operate the roads, the equipment, and the manpower to take care of this thing in the roads. Down here in this end of the state, and probably while we're sitting here inside this Chamber, you don't consider it. But I've seen some of the winters when the state would only plough snow four days a week because they didn't have enough money to operate seven days a week on it. In the meantime, why, we either had ice, or something else quite thick on the roads that didn't get ploughed off. As far as an economic driver, it is. It's an economic driver. If we don't have transportation, we don't get any economic development in our areas. That's probably one of the three major parts of economic development, is transportation. If...right now, the trucking industry is probably the biggest that industry has ever been since man made a mule. If you don't believe it, why, it's supposed to be...Pine Bluffs, Wyoming is supposed to have 1,400 trucks a day go down Interstate 80 past it. And if you've ever saw them stopped in a storm, why I could believe every bit of it. So we have to have our highway system. We have to take care of it. It's something that's been funded by itself all the time. We haven't had to go out and find funds for it like we have some of the other parts of the federal...of our state government. I stand by my statement, when Senator Schrock's amendment was, that this is something that works, and if it's working, why try to fix it? I think we're still waiting in areas. Our highway...our Heartland Highway in the western end of Nebraska isn't nearly completed yet. In fact, some of the