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LB 962

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.

SENATOR BEUTLER: ...cannot be seen out of context.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Senator Chambers, there are no further lights on, no senators...I'm sorry, there are. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Let me just finish quickly, or progress quickly with this, for a couple of more minutes. The mental health reform, one of the new programs, is a fixed amount of additional cost pegged at \$2.5 million in '04-05, and then \$2.5 million every year thereafter, regardless of whether our budget situation gets any better. The Water Policy Task Force money was put in originally. I agreed to putting it in. It's put in at \$2.5 million. I might say parenthetically that unless the A bill has been amended, it's recommending \$4.5 million, I believe, the second year out. So we have a little reconciliation to do here with regard to what we have in the budget. But \$4.5 million is not, is not currently in the budget to be paid for. So we'd be increasing our bottom line of the budget if we went all the way to 4.5, for example. The Children's Task Force, another new program, the third of the more expensive new programs, pegged at \$2.3 million this year--and by this year I mean this fiscal year, which ends in...at the end of June--and \$5.5 million next fiscal year and \$5.5 million every year thereafter, whether or not we've experienced economic recovery. And then beyond that, a number of our retirement programs are out of kilter now. We've gone through some poor times in terms of investment. We've added benefits in the flush times, and they're not quite balancing out. So we're going to need to put another \$.5 million in the...probably, in the OPS retirement account, we're going to need to put \$430,000 in the State Patrol retirement account, both of these just to pick up shortfalls that are there. We want to restore the Forest Service for the purpose of protecting the volunteer fire departments and enabling them to get equipment out and around the rural areas. We've all agreed that we would like to do that. That's pegged at \$300,000 next year, and after that \$590,000 every year. State insurance programs will require another \$170 million. And now hear this one,