

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE  
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FLOOR DEBATE

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I think maybe we have a little failure to communicate here. Senator Beutler, he thinks that there's going to be several million dollars coming out of the Environmental Trust, perhaps, but it's going to be on the basis that all the other grants are awarded. Well, I'm under the impression that the money, the \$2.5 million, is going to come off the top of the Environmental Trust, and not part of the grant process. Senator Schrock wants to increase property taxes. Senator Wehrbein and others think that maybe some of this should be General Fund money. I don't disagree with that either, if we had it. Senator Jones, he doesn't want there to be any fees, where Senator Beutler does. Maybe fees are appropriate. What I'm suggesting is, is this is not insignificant. This is \$14.5 million per year, when we're running as bad a deficits as we've had in the last two years. I don't even see how any of us can vote for this to advance to Select File unless we have some sort of a funding mechanism in place. When you look at a program that is \$14.5 million, and supposedly Senator Beutler and Senator Schrock had an agreement where they were going to fund it to the tune of \$1.5 million per year,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR BOURNE: ...what is \$1.5 million a year going to do to a \$14.5 million project? They'll be able to buy their stationery and their paper clips, maybe hire a couple people. When this...when and if this goes through the grant process of the Environmental Trust, in one year they give the grant, the next year they decide, no, we're not going to get the grant. The program is up and running. Well, then who funds it? General Fund? Fees? Then what? You know, all too often we go to advance these bills to Select File without a plan, without a scheme. I've listened to the debate. I participated a little bit at the beginning when I asked about the funding. I'll vote to fund things if it makes some sense. I'm struggling here. And I don't hear other people saying they have similar concerns. And maybe I'm alone. I don't know. But we're being asked to raise taxes here. We're being asked to raise taxes, the property taxes, to fund our regular budget,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time.