

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 17, 2004 LB 962A

all, it's to cut back on the General Funds that were originally anticipated. Secondly, instead of pouring a bunch of money into it right now, it's putting some money in to allow them to get started, and then to see what happens over the period of a year. There were several things that we will be looking at. First of all, in this first year there is going to be some participation by the Environmental Trust. The level of that participation we will see. I suggest to you it's going to be very substantial because of the types of things they deal with will involve, or their high priorities will involve, some of the aspects of this water planning that's going on. The Environmental Trust, by the way, funded a number of the water studies of the Republican Valley. It funded the Water Policy Task Force, itself. So we'll be able in one year's time to see what has been done totally, what they're planning to do, how much money they really need. I mean this is highly speculative at this point in time in any event. Then next year when the Appropriations Committee and you all will be adopting another budget for the next two years, then we can sit down and look again at how all of this plays out. The budget period that we're going through right now is not designed to balance this year. It's designed to balance at the end of three years. At least that was the planning process that the Governor and the Appropriations Committee agreed upon. There's a lot more to discuss in that area, but I'm not sure that now is the appropriate time to get into it. What I would recommend to you is that you adopt this compromise which puts everything on track to proceed. You'll have the budget debate later this week and next week, probably. When this comes up on Select File, you can look back again and see if you're comfortable with what is in the A bill. But that's it, basically; it cuts back from \$7 million dollars of General Funds to \$1.5 million of General Funds and anticipates the participation of the Environmental Trust. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Beutler. (Visitors introduced.) On with discussion of LB 962A and the amendment to it offered by Senator Beutler, AM3204. Open for discussion, Senator Wehrbein.

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. President and members. So it's clear, I'm going to support this amendment at this point