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FLOOR DEBATE

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here looking for money continually. These people do that for no compensation. It gets in their blood. Some of them stay there for 30, 40 years, that have been very active on the rural fire departments. And whatever we can do, if we keep the funding in there for the forestry, that's just one more piece of fire equipment that the local fire districts won't have to purchase because they are returned back to the local fire districts after they're...I guess after their use is up with the forestry division. So they are actually in pretty good shape when they come to the local districts and they use them a lot for brush fires, so on and so forth. If you have a railroad running through your district, you know what happens there. Occasionally on dry hot summer days the fire engines and the...will be out fighting fires caused by the railroads in one way or another. And these vehicles that the forestry division does give back to those local districts provide a great service for those. So this is something that's very important, as Senator Wehrbein has stated, and you really should support this. This is something that will help the whole state, not one part of it but the whole state as well. Thank you very much.

SENATOR CUDABACK PRESIDING

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Janssen. Further discussion? Senator Stuthman, followed by Senator Engel and Loudon.

SENATOR STUTHMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members of the body. I am truly in favor of this also, but I want to talk to you a little about the rural fire districts or fire departments and the concerns that I have with these districts. They are very valuable to the communities that they have. But the problems that we're having right now on the totally volunteer departments, a lot of these small communities, their volunteers are people from the small community working in larger cities and towns around. These people are not able to get off of work to go help fight a fire. There is not as many people there anymore. So the assistance that's given to the fire departments, when they do have a call, you know is very minimal. Sometimes it takes quite awhile before a lot of the volunteers get there. We also have a situation in my local area what has a