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FLOOR DEBATE

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committee. I know that it was not unanimous to bring it back from being indefinitely postponed. So I think this concept is flawed. I think there are constitutional issues with this concept. I think it's a poor idea. Public power, in my opinion, is one of our state treasures. Notwithstanding Senator Brashear, other folks, I think that this is something we need to vehemently protect. And we enjoy some of the lowest power rates in the entire country, and there's a reason for that. It's because it's public power. I think that if...similar to the reasons I was opposed to the scam concept, put a surcharge on the power bill, I think that that is the proverbial nose under the camel tent (sic). And if you look at our power bills now, there's no surcharges. There's no other things on there. But compare the...compare your electric bill to your phone bill. How many complaints have you had from constituents regarding phone bills? If you look at that, half of the base on your phone bill is taxes. That's because we let, as a Legislature, as a body a few years ago, we let certain things get attached on there, and now the taxes are unbelievable on your phone bill, and I would...I would suggest to you that the exact same thing is going to happen to your electric bill if we allow this to go forward. But again, I think there is some constitutional issues with this and, if this does go forward, I will explore those in great detail. Please don't misunderstand that the lateness of me putting on my light is anything less than strenuous opposition, because I think this is a poor idea. With all respect to Senator Beutler, this is a...this is a fatally flawed concept, in my mind. I want to offer one last thing. Then I'm going to yield some time to Senator Brashear. If anyone in here thinks that should we eventually end up paying on that judgment, that we're going to have to write a check for \$100 and \$160, \$170 million immediately, that's not the case. Ask any lawyer in here. They will tell you that we'll be...if, and I'm not acknowledging we're going to owe this even though it, you know, it does not look good, but any lawyer in here will tell you that there will be some form of a structured settlement. We'll stretch this out over five years, seven years, whatever. At least that's how these concepts generally go. I cannot imagine any situation where we'd have to, bam, write a check for \$160 million, \$170 million, should the judgment ultimately go against us. So while we do need to do something, whether it's