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FLOOR DEBATE

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this year. I asked Senator Wehrbein that and he agreed with that statement. We have enough cash, we have enough Cash Reserve Fund, we do not need to raise revenue this year to satisfy our obligations exclusive of the potential judgment. In my opinion, the only reason that we're discussing the surcharge on electricity, Senator Brashear's bonding proposal or Senator Hartnett's income tax proposal is to deal with the eventuality of the judgment, and I've said that two or three times and no one has contradicted it. If you look at the green sheet, I believe what I am saying is true, and if there's a member of the Appropriations Committee that wants to dispute or refute what I've said, please stand up and do that. But again, the only reason that we would be talking about revenue is for two situations--the judgment or to prepare for the out years when it's obvious that we're having a shortfall. So again, I know that we're talking about raising the income tax and if that's going to go into the General Fund, I'm going to be absolutely opposed to that. I'll probably be opposed to it either way. But what I think Senator Brashear is talking about doing is putting in place statutorily a mechanism by which we can respond in short order to a potential judgment, and that's what I'm going to support. I'm not going to support a general tax increase, a surcharge, an income tax increase, unless it is narrowly defined and allocated specifically to satisfying a potential judgment because I don't believe we need to raise revenue other than for that eventuality. So I'm standing up saying that I support Senator Brashear's concept to the extent that it satisfies the potential judgment. Other than that, we do not need to raise revenue to get us through in the short term. And if Senator Wehrbein wants my time, I'll give it...if that's an inaccurate statement, he's welcome to have my time. But again, what we're talking about is satisfying the eventuality of the judgment. We've heard a lot of talk about the Revenue Committee turned its back on the problem or ignored the problem or didn't do anything. We met as a committee, we talked to the Attorney General and his staff, and we concluded that we do not need to solve the problem today. And what I hear Senator Brashear advocating is that he wants to set up a mechanism by which to satisfy the judgment. That's the only thing we should be talking about. I don't believe we need to raise revenue right now except to satisfy the judgment, and