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FLOOR DEBATE

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lenders. Do we want our state's citizen taxpayers to be working for the people lending us, or buying the bonds in this case, and tax-free bonds at that? It's not going to show up on the income tax stream. I don't want to do that. We also need to get back to the basic principle that we still have way, way more needs for roads. Senator Stuhr brings up the issue. She has gravel state highways in her district. I have gravel state highways in my district. Senator Wehrbein has gravel state highways in his. Senator Schrock has gravel state highways in his. These are state highways that have never been paved, they're gravel. So if we're going to address the fuel tax issue, I know Senator Beutler and I have a bill to increase the fuel tax that goes to the cities and counties, we have tremendous amount of needs out there and we're losing sight of the...when the discussion of what we're really doing here. We're taking money from fuel tax, putting it into the Judgment Fund, if you will, and then later putting money into the General Fund, and thereby restricting our ability to possibly raise the variable fuel or any fuel tax down the road to address our transportation needs. To kind of get back to the basic discussion here, do we want to take money from fuel tax and put it into a Judgment Fund and General Fund when we've historically used it for roads? No, I don't want to do that. We have \$7.6 billion of needs on the books; 2003 needs assessment indicates \$7.6 billion worth of needs. These are not wants, people. The Transportation Task Force weeded out the wants; these are needs. Then we have the constitutional issue. In my mind, and I'm not one of these lawyer types in here. I'm taking this straight out of the constitution. Nebraska...this is not part of it but Nebraska's authority for issuing bonds under the constitution does not extend to bonding for nonhighway purposes. Bonding for the low-level radioactive waste judgement general expenses of the government is not constitutionally permissible. Nebraska's constitution provides for bonding when the Legislature determines by a three-fifths vote of its members that--and this is out of the constitution quoted--the need for construction of highways in the state requires such action, it may authorize the issuance of bonds for such construction. And I'm not one of these slick lawyers that have been...that word thrown around here, the need for construction of highways, then we can issue bonds. These bonds are not going for construction of highways, they're going to the Judgment Fund. And the second