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LB 1090

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. Members of the Legislature, we've been a little short on time in terms of responding to the shifting moods of the body and their desire to discuss a number of things, but let me tell you the amendment that's up before you right now is the electrical surcharge amendment, but that's not what I'm going to talk about and that's not what will be put before you just as soon as the sales tax amendment is prepared. So the idea is to allow you to discuss something that's not my personal first choice in terms of how we solve this problem, but something that maybe you want to choose. And so, therefore, we ought to get it out there and see what you're thinking about a half-cent sales tax. And that is basically what the amendment, when substituted, that's basically what we would do. We would have a additional half-cent sales tax for one year that would raise about \$122 million; half-cent sales tax, one year, \$122 million, the intent of which, of course, is that that would go towards the solution of the low-level waste problem. Now if Senator Brashear were here at the moment he would criticize this, of course, in that this particular one year, \$122 million, does not get us to the \$151 million, \$160 million level that's minimal to solve the low-level waste problem in its entirety should that judgment come down against us in its entirety. There are different ways of dealing with that gap. You might choose, instead of having the sales tax for 12 months, to have it extended for 15 months. That would bring in \$151 million. You might choose not to extend it beyond 12 months, to leave it at the \$122 million, and to add to the mix perhaps a more modified version of Senator Hartnett's income tax. If you took his income tax, for example, at the \$35 million-a-year level, you could add that to the \$122 million of a half a cent sales tax for a year and you would have \$157 million. So if you feel, as I think you felt yesterday, that there ought to be some significant partial solution to our overall problem, and keep in mind again that everything I've talked about so far has to do with settling the low-level waste lawsuit, none of this that we're talking about at the moment, and when Senator Brashear's proposal comes along, it's scaled down to the low-level waste scale of \$150 million or \$160 million, even that...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.