

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

April 1, 2004

LB 1090

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you. Senator Beutler, you're recognized to open on your amendment.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Schimek, members of the Legislature, we're to the point now where if we want to exercise some positive leadership, we can solve the problem with this bill. With this amendment, what I'm doing is deleting out of the bill everything having to do with the electrical surcharge. The electrical surcharge was my idea. I thought it was a good idea. I looked forward to voting with Senator Pam Redfield on it together. We relished those moments when we can together do something. But it is the third choice of a series of choices and options. I've been around. I've talked to enough people. What people are most interested in is either the sales tax or there are 17 to 20 who want the income tax. There is not a majority for either one, but that's the playing field, and we can all get on that little playing field and we can say, if I don't get it my way, I'm taking the football and going home. I had a couple cousins like that. Or you can say, let's think about where each of us can give a little, regardless of which side of the situation that we're on, and try to make something of it. Senator Janssen's bill (sic) is a \$158 million proposition, but when you subtract out of it the surcharge, as this amendment would do, you're dealing with a revenue-raising proposition of \$112 million which would consist of a quarter percent sales tax for roughly \$61 million and a year of income tax increase, both of these increases for one year, of \$51 million. Frankly, this Legislature is no different than a hundred that came before us. We've always ended up kind of splitting halfway between income and sales tax, and that's basically what this Janssen bill (sic) would do once you adopt this amendment. And if we can't figure out, with a \$296 million deficit, how to come together when all of the Legislatures before us have managed to make this compromise, there's something wrong with us. There really is. Every business would put on its balance sheet a contingent liability of the nature of this low-level judgment. It would be there and they would set aside funds to take care of it, aside from their other business operations. An insurance company would set aside reserves to pay this. We've made revenue estimates in the same manner that