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LB 962

SENATOR WEHRBEIN: Thank you, Mr. President and members. This is an issue that I think that we've worked out for the next year. This is effective only for one year for the funding for this Water Task Force. And if you recall back over the last few weeks, we've had intense discussion for the financing of this. This bill...this amendment will propose to take \$1 million from the Environmental Trust Fund for one year and \$1.5 million from the Petroleum Release Fund, or L-U-S-T, LUST, for one year, \$1.5 million. First of all is the \$1 million coming from the Environmental Trust Fund, which this is less than the original proposal of \$2.5 million. So it represents a reduction in that of \$1.5 million below the \$2.5 million that was originally proposed. So it now becomes \$1 million from the Environmental Trust Fund. The other \$1.5 million now is proposed to come from the LUST fund, the L-U-S-T, the Leaking Underground...Leaking Underground, oh, boy, tanks, Storage Tanks. Couldn't think of storage. And this is approximately the amount of interest that has been generated from that fund for the last three years, but it varies, but it is approximately about the average of the money generated from that. So it's really interest from the LUST fund. It cuts only modest, very modestly into the core fund and would be only for this next year. After that, it will have to be looked at in the next year's budget or returned to the General Fund. But for this next year, this is a proposal to fund the Water Task Force, which most of us, and I feel very strongly that we do need to proceed on our water studies across the state, and this is the mechanism for funding it. I guess I would give my...the rest of my time, and there is one more issue in this amendment, I'll let Senator Bromm speak to that, if he would like to at this time.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Bromm, did you wish to speak to the Wehrbein amendment?

SENATOR BROMM: Thank you, Mr. President. Yes, thank you, Senator Wehrbein, for allowing us to include this in the amendment, This is a kind of part of an overall agreement on this funding and Senator Beutler, as well, who has had an interest in this topic. We did attempt to do some looking at the LUST fund and the provisions for requiring or not requiring insurance or the state providing the coverage for leaking