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FLOOR DEBATE

April 13, 2004      LB 1065

because yours was the last light. Thank you anyway. Senator Beutler, you're recognized to close on AM3636.

**SENATOR BEUTLER:** Members of the Legislature, let me talk about the amendment again, just to be absolutely clear. No rates are increased. Corn checkoff rate is not increased, off-road fuel tax is not increased. All that happens is out there in the Fiscal Years '09-10, '10-11, '11-12, in those three fiscal years, out in the far end of the credits, the fuel tax is extended for two years and the grain checkoff is extended for one year, both at the same rates that they're contributing right now. So we're adding two years in one case and one year in the next case, of contribution. This amendment is totally in accord with the original view and vision of LB 1065 to fully fund what we know is there now. This has nothing to do with the possibility of three or four more sneaking in under the wire, if sneaking is the right word--has nothing to do with all that. True, we will have to deal with that when and if it happens. This deals with those that are already qualified, that we know we have to pay for, that LB 1065 in its original form knew we had to pay for and provided payment. But we took out the fuel tax. We took out the fuel tax so that it was no longer a comprehensive bill funding everything we knew we had to pay. It became at that point, in my mind, fiscally necessary but fiscally irresponsible. What this amendment does is to substitute those things that I just described to you for the fuel tax that was deleted. And in that sense, it is absolutely in line with the arguments of the proponents of LB 1065 when they brought that bill to this floor. Now they're changing their tune, and I think obviously from the discussion, the reason is, not because they don't think it should be fully funded; they, of course, think it should be fully funded; but the reason is that they don't want to put more corn checkoff in without bargaining for General Funds. But we already are putting corn checkoff in those out years, if you look at the chart, without committing General Funds. And we're going to have lots of pressure to commit General Funds even if we do this because, remember, we have two or three more coming. And finally, the bottom line argument on my part is that this is a good deal for grain farmers, whether they have to pay for it or they don't have to pay for it. Twenty-five percent of our crop