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SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Chambers. You've heard the opening, without objection, on the substitute amendment, AM0939. Open for discussion on that amendment, Senator Cunningham.

SENATOR CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Senator Cudaback and members. I'm sorry that this all happened the way it happened. I take full responsibility for that question. It came totally from me, not from anyone in the lobby, and I apologize to Senator Chambers if there's any thought that this goes back on our agreement. I think it's a good agreement. I think we've worked hard on it, and I wish you would support it. So with that, I will donate my time back. Thank you.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Cunningham. On with discussion, Senator Wehrbein. He waives the opportunity. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Senator Cudaback, members of the Legislature, just so that every part of the amendment is explained for those who might have an interest, the first part of the amendment addressed the question of the frozen benefit rate that would pertain in instances where the fund dropped below .4 ratio. In that instance, there are really two different circumstances. One circumstance applies to the near years where an emergency surcharge can be put on if it drops below .4, in which case the corresponding complement to that was to be that if the employer put in all of this additional money in an emergency surcharge, then the benefit rate would be frozen for that year. The problem, from my perspective, was that even beyond those years where an emergency surcharge under the bill could be levied, that benefit was frozen if the fund dropped below .4. In other words, in the year 2020, for example, if the fund dropped below .4, there's no authority in the bill to levy a surcharge. And, hopefully, there will never be a need to do that. But there's no authority in the bill to levy a surcharge, but under the bill as it currently is, the wage benefit would be frozen nonetheless. So all this does is simply make the freezing of the benefit correspond to the levying of the surcharge, which Senator Cunningham indicated was the original intent in the