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LB 689

SENATOR CUDABACK: Time, Senator. Sorry, Senator Beutler. Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR STUHR: Thank you, Mr. President. I'd give my time to Senator Raikes so that he can continue that discussion.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Raikes.

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Senator Stuhr. And, Senator Beutler, if I could I'll engage you to continue the conversation. The belief is that we are going to be able to come up with a plan. The best recommendations we have from the people who know most about this sort of thing suggest to us that it will cost, as you suggested, between \$8 million and \$10 million a year over a three-year period in order to implement it. It needs to begin in 2006, say July 1, 2006. If that's the case, how...what is the most prudent way to plan for that financially? I think what our approach here was to say that 8...I think there's an amendment that Senator Stuhr has, \$8 million is our best estimate of what is likely to be required, so we are going to put that amount of money as an item in the budget in the second year of the biennium for which we are now budgeting. If you'd like to respond to that?

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Beutler, respond.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Well, a couple of initial observations, Senator. First of all, I'm troubled by a process that puts the gun to our head, sort of, before we know what the plan is. And I'm sure it had nothing to do with you, but if these people who are most interested in this could have come to us a little earlier, we wouldn't be in this position that you're describing today, if in fact we're in that position. Secondly, July 1, 2006, we can budget next year for an appropriation to begin on that date, and so I would be most interested in knowing what specific...which specific contracts cannot be extended for the period of a few months in order to accommodate the...perhaps the desire of the Legislature to see what's in this package, rather than buying...rather than appropriating \$8 million before we know what kind of pig is in the sack.