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FLOOR DEBATE

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SENATOR LOUDEN: Well, I guess no different than they put any money in anything else. This is a...was some animal damage control. This program was started, what, 30 years ago, maybe 40 years ago, when it was first started, and over the years the state has kind of backed off from funding any of it. I think like 1991 or something was the last time they put any money into that fund. So it's like any other help you have, whatever you're using money for, to try to improve situations in some areas of the state.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: What I'm asking--why should the General Fund, which is tax money that everybody put in there, go for a program like this, which not only benefits a small area of the state, but goes contrary to what many of the citizens would like to see? Let me ask the question very simply now. Why is the state being asked to put money into this program, rather than allowing the counties to pick up this cost? And you can start by telling me what this money will go for, and then tell me why the counties should not have to pay it.

SENATOR LOUDEN: Okay, the counties at the present time are the ones that are paying for this cost. Each county that is involved in that--I think there's like 38 counties or something like that, that contributes to their own fund and they contract with Animal, Plant, and Wildlife Service USDA (inaudible). Now the reason for this on the prairie dog part is if there's going to be some management plans that have to be looked at, and some areas that will need some type of managing so that it isn't just the counties going out there and eradicating a bunch of prairie dogs. There's ways that they can be managed, and of course, when you have the Department of Agriculture and people involved, there's no doubt going to be some cost involved for specialists to run around and check into what has to be done on some of these areas. I'm sure there's going to be counties that are going ask for some expertise help from environmentalists on what to do with some of the colonies that are encroaching someplace, and so the amount of money isn't that significant. Hopefully, there isn't that much of a need for it; that's the reason we're trying to get by on a cheaper level.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: But Senator Louden, you began by saying that