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LB 424

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Chambers, to open on your amendment to the committee amendments.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, as I have indicated, my attention is going to focus on this budget bill. And this amendment focuses on the Game and Parks Commission. I get so much material that comes to my office, as the rest of you do, that I don't have the opportunity to read it when it first arrives. I've got mail--and this is not meant to be humorous--from people who have passed on to eternity, and I'm just now opening it. I had laid it aside. Then I discovered it. I'm trying to keep up with my mail better than that. This amendment is based on information that I received in a mailing from the Environmental Trust Fund. Several grants were awarded to Game and Parks by that fund. Game and Parks is always in here begging money from the state. They always want to increase the fees, always putting up a pitiful mouth. And I think it has become a sacrosanct entity. It is like a fiefdom, and it's presided over by the big shots and the fat cats. What this amendment would do is to create a wash. I'm going to read the purpose of this amendment, so the record is clear. And since I just filed it, people connected with Game and Parks will know. The Game and Parks Commission was awarded \$2,047,730 in grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust Fund in 2005, for wildlife habitat and other environmental improvement purposes. Several of these grants were for multiyear projects, and the intent was expressed to provide additional funding in the subsequent two years. Specifically, intent was expressed to provide additional funding of \$597,699 in 2006, and \$75,000 in 2007. This amendment would reduce the cash fund appropriation used by the Game and Parks Commission for similar habitat and environmental purposes by \$350,000 in FY 2005-06. That is taking this thing step by step, to deal with the money that they got from the Environmental Trust Fund. Then, when we get to LB 425, there will be an additional provision that will complete the process. But this amendment that I'm offering goes to LB 424. I am not anti Game and Parks. But I am anti the acceptance of inappropriate, improper priorities. I like to give forewarning, when I can, to my colleagues of what is on my mind and what is particularly troubling to me. To take all of the money from the