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FLOOR DEBATE

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Environmental Quality requests additional funding to provide the state's share of the cost for the Superfund program. The Environmental Protection Agency requires that the state pay 20 percent of the Superfund site remediation costs. In recent years, all General Funds appropriated for this purpose were eliminated, and the department had funded the state's share cost expenses with grants from the Environmental Trust. The Governor's recommendation anticipates that all costs will be paid from the Environmental Trust. The Appropriations Committee recommendation includes cash funding resulting from one-time use of funds from the Integrated Solid Waste Management Fund, and this authorizing language to allow the transfer of \$1,384,484 from the Integrated Solid Waste Management Fund to the Superfund Cost Share is contained in Section 1 of the committee amendment. And as to the environmental cleanup, the committee has recommended \$4,169,760 General Fund and \$2,760,760 from the Environmental Trust Fund, for a total of \$6,930,000. The Governor's recommendation provided \$3 million from the Environmental Trust Fund, the remainder from other funds--the University Cash Fund Foundation, private, and so forth. The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for cleaning up the Mead property, except in four areas. And in 1960, the University of Nebraska legally disposed of chemicals and low-level radioactive waste in these four areas, as I mentioned earlier, and since that time, the EPA has ordered removal of the containers and the chemicals and the low-level radioactive waste, and cleanup of any contamination. The university has hired a technical engineering firm for this purpose, and the total project time is three years, and that time is approaching, so we have to get this done. We are under a strict time line to get this done for the university. This was something that had not been anticipated, that there would be this kind of a time line, and that's the reason for it coming in at this time, as a...in a deficit appropriation situation. So this has been a cooperative effort, and I really sincerely appreciate the cooperation of the Environmental Trust, and I've been negotiating this with Senator Beutler, who has been an active proponent of the Environmental Trust, and I think we've reached an accord where we're able to accomplish this without encroaching on the Environmental Trust in the manner that the Governor had initially proposed. I would ask your approval of the committee amendment. Thank you.