TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE Transcriber's Office FLOOR DEBATE

April 3, 2006 LB 79

the railroads would want to cross (sic) them because the crossings aren't used that often. But if there's prairie fires or anything, you have to have them there and it's something that I've worked with on the railroads for probably over 40 years, keeping crossings open up and down on lands where we border railroad crossings. The railroad wants to close crossings all the time because that always gives them a problem with keeping their railroad bed from washing out. Usually crossings will hold water so that whenever trains go by, the water works as kind of a hydraulic jack and works the dirt out from underneath there. And of course, it gets bumpy. If you ever watch a train going across a railroad crossing, you'll see the tracks work up and down. Many a times, they're working up and down over a foot and this always scares the engineers, of course, because if the train gets to bouncing up and down a foot, you want to remember there's only about a inch-and-a-half flange there on the wheel of the train to make sure it comes back down on the tracks. So this is something the railroads, if there is a crossing out there that needs to be closed, I kid you not, the railroads have already come up with the idea to do it and it will probably be closed. Because if they can figure out ways to close them, they certainly do. And those that aren't necessary usually get Anymore, the counties on railroad crossings usually always make...set up the road so you come up square to the railroad crossing. That's been a big improvement over the years. For years, there were railroad crossing that you'd come at an angle and those were always dangerous. But anymore, especially in the Box Butte County area where the railroads go diagonal across the county, why, nearly all the crossings that I know of come up square to the railroad track and that's been a safety issue for that. But to set in statute that how some of these railroad crossings are going to be closed is something that I think is going to go way too far. I think this is going to be a detriment to many of the people, even by having an engineer come out, which I suppose would be from the state Department of Roads, I guess, the way I understand this amendment, still isn't the answer. Some of them aren't that familiar with the country. Some of them have never been out there where the railroads are. A lot of the areas where people use the railroads for short periods of time to get in and out of there to check pastures or move cattle or cross cattle is