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LB 1249

SENATOR BAKER: Time.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...there is no guarantee that the ratepayers are not going to be gouged. Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR BAKER: Thank you, Senator Chambers. Senator Friend.

SENATOR FRIEND: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. I don't mean to interrupt the mental gymnastics between Senator Chambers and Senator Landis, but I am going to take it down a little different path here. Senator Hudkins had asked a pertinent question earlier, and Senator Landis answered it as effectively as I think he could, with the time that he had remaining. She said, what happens if this bill doesn't pass? I mean, what's worst-case scenario? I know she didn't ask me the question, but I couldn't necessarily accept the answer that Senator Landis gave. I think it would be intellectually lazy of me to have accepted that answer four years ago, three years ago, or today. And I think, and I'm paraphrasing, is that if nothing happens, we're going to have this continued, you know, work by some of these jurisdictional utilities or metropolitan utilities districts that would cost the ratepayers money. Well, look, I asked at this hearing on LB 1249, flat out, to an MUD--I believe...I won't name the name, because I don't recall off the top of my head--but a...one of the legal staff at MUD, I said, when is the last time you've taken a backhoe out and had to pull up a bunch of gas line that you put in there at ratepayers' expense, that you shouldn't have put in? His answer was never, and I'm paraphrasing, but I believe, on the record, his answer was, I don't recall that we've ever done that. So I think, with all due respect to Senator Landis, I disagree with what the end result of this particular bill not passing would be. That stuff is not going on right now, folks. They are not...MUD is not running around the metropolitan area, nor is Aquila, and yanking up a bunch of pipe or abandoning it and costing their ratepayers money. Now can I speak to the idea or the issue that some of this stuff might have been happening 15 years ago or 10 years ago? No, I can't. I can tell you this: I've got a case study right here that I looked at--actually, it was before the hearing--that laid out some of those costs. I'd be happy to