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Floor Debate
March 15, 2016

CLERK: 35 AYES, 0 NAYS, MR. PRESIDENT, ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE BILL.
[LB981]

SENATOR SCHEER: THE BILL ADVANCES. MR. CLERK FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS.
[LB981]

CLERK: MR. PRESIDENT, A NEW A BILL, LB977A. (READ LB977A BY TITLE FOR THE FIRST TIME.) SENATOR SULLIVAN WOULD LIKE TO PUT IN AN AMENDMENT TO LB930, SENATOR CAMPBELL TO LB698A. SENATOR SCHNOOR OFFERS A NEW RESOLUTION, MR. PRESIDENT, LR484. THAT WILL BE LAID OVER AT THIS TIME. THAT'S ALL THAT I HAVE. (LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL PAGES 988-989.) [LB977A LB930 LB698A LR484]

SENATOR SCHEER: MR. CLERK, WE'LL PROCEED TO GENERAL FILE, LB960.
[LB960]

CLERK: MR. PRESIDENT, LB960, WAS A BILL ORIGINALLY INTRODUCED BY SENATOR SMITH AT THE REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR. (READ TITLE.) INTRODUCED ON JANUARY 14, REFERRED TO THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, ADVANCED TO GENERAL FILE. THERE ARE COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS PENDING, MR. PRESIDENT. (AM2418, LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL PAGE 911.) [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, MR. CLERK. SENATOR SMITH, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED TO OPEN ON LB960. [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. AND GOOD AFTERNOON, COLLEAGUES. LB960 WOULD ALLOW FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION ACT. FIRST I'D LIKE TO THANK SENATOR BRASCH FOR MAKING MY BILL HER PERSONAL PRIORITY BILL THIS SESSION. I GREATLY APPRECIATE WORKING WITH SENATOR BRASCH THIS YEAR. AND THEN I WANT TO THANK THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FOR RECOGNIZING HOW VITAL INVESTING IN OUR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS AND MOVING OUR

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STATE FORWARD. DURING THE FEBRUARY 16 HEARING THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS SPENT HOURS LISTENING CAREFULLY TO THE TESTIMONY, TESTIMONY THAT INCLUDED 20 PROPONENTS REPRESENTING A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT ASSOCIATIONS, GOVERNMENTAL SUBDIVISIONS, AND BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES. THE BILL WAS ADVANCED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE WITH A COMMITTEE AMENDMENT WHICH I THINK MAKES THIS GOOD BILL EVEN BETTER. I WANT TO COMMEND THE MEMBERS OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THEIR...ALL OF THEIR HARD WORK AND I'D LIKE TO ALSO THANK THE ADMINISTRATION FOR ITS STRONG SUPPORT OF THIS LEGISLATION. LB960 IS DEFINITELY THE PRODUCT OF A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AND I BELIEVE IT WILL BE A POLICY THIS LEGISLATURE AND THIS STATE CAN BE VERY PROUD OF. IN MY OPENING I WILL GIVE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE BILL AND THEN SENATOR MELLO WILL FOLLOW WITH THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT, WHICH, AGAIN, I FULLY SUPPORT. FROM A 30,000-FOOT VIEW, THE TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION ACT WILL MAXIMIZE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK. IT WILL REDUCE PRESSURE ON DESIGNATED AND PROGRAM PROJECTS SUCH AS THE LINCOLN SOUTH BELTWAY. IT WILL FUND THE COMPLETION OF THE DESIGNATED BUT UNPROGRAMMED EXPRESSWAYS IN OUR STATE, INCLUDING HIGHWAY 275, HIGHWAY 81, AND SOME OF 75 SOUTH OF OMAHA. IT WILL ALSO ASSIST WITH THE NONDESIGNATED ROADWAYS IN OUR STATE THAT ARE NOT PROGRAMMED, INCLUDING THE HEARTLAND EXPRESSWAY, HIGHWAY 35 TO SOUTH SIOUX CITY, AND THE LINCOLN EAST BELTWAY. IT WILL ENCOURAGE STATE AND COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS TO BRING DILAPIDATED BRIDGES UP TO STANDARD AND IT WILL STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM. AND FINALLY, IT WILL MODERNIZE CONTRACTING METHODS THAT WILL HELP TO STRETCH OUR FUNDING DOLLARS MUCH FARTHER IN OUR STATE. AS YOU CONSIDER LB960, IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE, TO LOOK AT WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE NEED TO GO AS A STATE AND THE STEPS WE HAVE TAKEN TO THIS POINT AND THOSE WE WILL NEED TO TAKE TO CONTINUE TO MOVE US FORWARD. NATIONALLY WE HAVE FAILED IN TAKING CARE OF OUR CRITICAL

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INFRASTRUCTURE. A LACK OF INVESTMENT HAS RESULTED IN COSTLY CONGESTION AND DANGEROUSLY DILAPIDATED ROADS AND BRIDGES ACROSS OUR NATION. BUT LOCALLY IT'S AN EXCITING TIME FOR NEBRASKA. WE ARE ONE OF A HANDFUL OF STATES THAT HAVE TAKEN A STRONG STAND IN ENSURING A SAFE AND RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FOR OUR CITIZENS AND FOR OUR BUSINESSES. LB960 IS THE RESULT OF INTERIM HEARINGS THE TRANSPORTATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE CONDUCTED THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER AND ACROSS THE STATE. I WANT TO THANK THOSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHO SACRIFICED THEIR TIME AND COMMITTED THEIR TIME TO HEAR DIRECTLY FROM NEBRASKA COMMUNITIES, AS DID ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS NACO, THE LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES, 4 LANES 4 NEBRASKA, THE AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES, AND THE ASSOCIATION OF GENERAL CONTRACTORS, AND ALSO THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE. I APPRECIATE YOU FOLLOWING US ACROSS THE STATE, FROM BELLEVUE TO LINCOLN TO CRETE TO NORFOLK, GRAND ISLAND, AND ALL THE WAY TO SCOTTSBLUFF, WHERE I WAS PLEASED TO HAVE SENATOR STINNER JOIN US. WITHOUT SENATOR STINNER'S SUPPORT AND WITHOUT SENATOR SCHEER'S SUPPORT AND INPUT, THIS COMPREHENSIVE FUNDING BILL WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE, AND I GREATLY APPRECIATE BOTH OF THOSE SENATORS. THEY ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, BUT THEY ARE SOMEWHAT OF ADOPTED MEMBERS OF OUR TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE, GREATLY APPRECIATE THEIR HELP. AT THOSE HEARINGS, WE HEARD FROM FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES, FROM ENGINEERS AND BUILDERS, AND FROM LOCAL CITY AND COUNTY OFFICIALS. WE HEARD THAT ROADS AND BRIDGES ARE CRITICAL TO OUR STATE, CRITICAL TO THE LIVES OF FAMILIES, AND CRITICAL TO THE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND COMMERCE. AND WE HEARD VERY DIRECTLY AND VERY CLEARLY THAT WE NEED TO ACCELERATE THE COMPLETION OF OUR EXPRESSWAYS AND THE REPAIR OF OUR DEFICIENT BRIDGES. LB960 IS NOT AN ALTERNATIVE TO WHAT WE HAVE DONE THUS FAR. IT'S NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE BUILD NEBRASKA ACT. AND I WANT TO UNDERSCORE THAT: IT IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR THE BUILD NEBRASKA ACT, AND IT'S NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR THE ACTIONS WE TOOK LAST YEAR. IT'S IN

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ADDITION TO THOSE THINGS. IT'S A NECESSARY STEP IF WE WANT TO PULL OUR STATE OUT OF THE RUT OUR CRITICAL TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE HAS FALLEN INTO, DUE TO MANY YEARS OF INACTION. IN 1988, THE NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE PROMISED THE CITIZENS OF THIS STATE WE WOULD BUILD THE NEBRASKA EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM TO CONNECT OUR COMMUNITIES, FROM EAST TO WEST, NORTH TO SOUTH, TO GIVE EVERY NEBRASKAN ACCESS TO OUR HIGHWAYS AND OUR BYWAYS. NEARLY 30 YEARS LATER THAT PROMISE HAS NOT BEEN FULFILLED. WITH \$10.2 BILLION IN INTO 20-YEAR MAINTENANCE NEEDS ALONE, IT'S OBVIOUS OUR TRADITIONAL FUNDING SYSTEM WAS NOT SUFFICIENT. AND IN 2011 THE LEGISLATURE PASSED LB84, THE BUILD NEBRASKA ACT. THAT ACT HAS RESULTED IN AN ESTIMATED \$60 MILLION A YEAR DEDICATED TO THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM, FEDERALLY DESIGNATED HIGH-PRIORITY CORRIDORS, AND OTHER NEW HIGH-PRIORITY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS FOR THE STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM, YET, EVEN WITH THESE EXTRA FUNDS, TODAY OVER \$600 MILLION IN EXPRESSWAY PROJECTS REMAIN UNFINISHED AND UNFUNDED. THE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK CREATED UNDER LB960 WILL ALLOW ACCESS OF THE CASH RESERVE AND THE STATE'S PORTION OF THE MOTOR FUEL REVENUE TAX TO HELP FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS AND TO SET US ON THE RIGHT PATH TO MEET OUR INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS. THE INTENT OF THE LEGISLATION IS TO SEE THE COMPLETION OF THE DESIGNATED EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM BY JUNE 30 OF 2033. THE BILL ALSO REQUIRES NDOR TO PROVIDE ANNUAL UPDATES OF THE PROGRESS TO COMPLETE THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEMS. OTHER CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF OUR STATE'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HAVE BECOME DANGEROUSLY DILAPIDATED ARE OUR COUNTY BRIDGES. AS YOU HEARD LAST YEAR'S DEBATE, NEBRASKA HAS THE SEVENTH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF STRUCTURALLY DEFICIENT RURAL BRIDGES IN THE NATION. IT'S BEEN ESTIMATED IT WOULD COST UPWARDS OF \$800 MILLION TO BRING OUR BRIDGES UP TO STANDARD. THROUGH THE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK THE TRANSPORTATION INNOVATION ACT WILL ACCELERATE THE REPAIR OF DEFICIENT COUNTY BRIDGES BY ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTARY COUNTY BRIDGE MATCHING PROGRAM. ADDITIONALLY, FUNDS FROM THE INFRASTRUCTURE BANK WILL HELP FINANCE TRANSPORTATION

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IMPROVEMENTS THAT ATTRACT AND SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE NEWLY CREATED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM. AND THEN FINALLY, LB960 WILL PERMIT THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS TO UTILIZE THE DESIGN-BUILD AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGER/GENERAL CONTRACTOR METHODS OF CONTRACTING STATE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS. THIS ALTERNATIVE CONTRACTING METHOD WILL ALLOW FOR LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS TO BE DELIVERED FASTER AND IN A MORE EFFICIENT MANNER, AND HELPING TO STRETCH THOSE STATE DOLLARS FARTHER. OUR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE IS CRITICAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF OUR SMALLER COMMUNITIES AND THE GROWTH OF OUR STATE'S OVERALL ECONOMY. BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES RECOGNIZE THE QUALITY THAT A QUALITY ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE IS NECESSARY TO MOVE PRODUCE FROM FARM TO MARKET,... [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: ONE MINUTE. [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: ...TO SUPPORT FREIGHT AND PRODUCT, AND TO MOVE PASSENGERS AND EMPLOYEES AND TO DO IT EFFICIENTLY AND SAFELY. AGAIN, COLLEAGUES, THIS IS AN EXCITING TIME FOR NEBRASKA. WE ARE TAKING CONTROL OF THIS ISSUE AND WE'RE MAKING A PATH FORWARD FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS IN NEBRASKA. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME TODAY. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH. AS THE CLERK STATED, THERE ARE AMENDMENTS FROM THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. SENATOR MELLO, AS CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED TO OPEN ON THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS. [LB960]

SENATOR MELLO: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE. THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AMENDMENT, AM2418, DOES A NUMBER OF ITEMS THAT I WILL WALK THROUGH BEFORE DISCUSSING CONCEPTUALLY CONCEPTS OF THE BILL. FIRST ITEM: IT INCORPORATES

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TECHNICAL CHANGES TO THE DESIGN-BUILD AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGER/
GENERAL CONTRACTOR PORTIONS OF THE BILL AS SUGGESTED BY SENATOR
SMITH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS. THAT WAS BROUGHT TO US AT THE
HEARING. SECOND, IT REDUCES THE AMOUNT TRANSFERRED FROM THE STATE'S
CASH RESERVE FUND TO THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK FUND
FROM \$150 MILLION BETWEEN JULY 1, 2016, AND JUNE 30, 2023, TO A ONE-TIME
\$50 MILLION TRANSFER IN JULY 2016. IT ELIMINATES THE PLEDGE OF \$150
MILLION OF FUEL TAXES BETWEEN JULY 1, 2016, AND JUNE 30 OF 2023, AND
REPLACES IT WITH AN ACTUAL TRANSFER TO THE TRANSPORTATION
INFRASTRUCTURE BANK FUND OF MORE THAN \$400 MILLION OF FUEL TAXES
GENERATED BY LAST YEAR'S LB610 BETWEEN JULY 1, 2016, AND JUNE 30, 2033.
THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING FOR THE COUNTY BRIDGE MATCH PROGRAM IS
EARMARKED AT NO MORE THAN \$40 MILLION, AND THE SUNSET DATE IS
EXTENDED FROM JUNE 30, 2019, TO JUNE 30, 2023. THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING FOR
THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM IS EARMARKED AT NO MORE THAN \$20
MILLION. IT ALSO REQUIRES THE DETAILS OF THE COUNTY BRIDGE MATCH
PROGRAM AND THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM TO BE PRESENTED TO
THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AND THE TRANSPORTATION AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE BY DECEMBER 1 OF 2016. IT ALSO INSERTS
LANGUAGE THAT NO PROJECT SHALL BE APPROVED THROUGH THE ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM WITHOUT AN ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS PROVING
POSITIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FUNDING THAT PROJECT. IT PROVIDES ALSO
THAT THE UNOBLIGATED BALANCE IN THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
BANK FUND ON JUNE 30, 2033, SHALL BE TRANSFERRED, IF THERE IS ANY LEFT,
TO THE STATE'S CASH RESERVE FUND. AND LASTLY, IT REQUIRES THE NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF ROADS TO ANNUALLY REPORT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, INCLUDING THE GROWTH AND
PERMANENT JOBS AND RELATED INCOME AND THE NET INCREASE IN OVERALL
BUSINESS ACTIVITY DUE TO THE PROJECT THAT WAS FUNDED. THE BILL WAS
AMENDED AND VOTED OUT OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE,
COLLEAGUES, ON A 9-0 VOTE. THE COMMITTEE SHOWED OVERWHELMING
SUPPORT OF SENATOR SMITH'S LB960. AS WHAT SENATOR SMITH MENTIONED, I'D

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LIKE TO PERSONALLY THANK HIS HARD WORK IN REGARDS TO DISCUSSING THIS BILL OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS, AS WELL AS THANKING THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLICY RESEARCH OFFICE IN REGARDS TO THEIR HARD WORK OF GOING THROUGH A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL COMPROMISES AND CHALLENGES AS WE WERE WORKING THROUGH THE BILL. I THINK MORE IMPORTANTLY, COLLEAGUES, I'VE HAD A NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS WITH MANY OF YOU THROUGHOUT THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION ABOUT THIS PARTICULAR BILL WHICH WAS INCLUDED AS PART OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION. AND I THINK WHAT YOU HEARD FROM SENATOR SMITH IN HIS OPENING DOVETAILS NICELY WITH WHAT WE JUST DISCUSSED WITH THE BUDGET PROCESS. BUT THIS BILL WAS...WE TRIED TO BUILD THIS BILL THROUGH CONSENSUS AND I REALLY THINK WHAT YOU HAVE THROUGH THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT, SUPPORTED BY SENATOR SMITH, SUPPORTED BY THE ADMINISTRATION, AND SUPPORTED BY THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE ON A 9-0 VOTE, SHOWS WE WORKED TOWARDS CONSENSUS TO BE ABLE TO FUND NOT ONLY WHAT WAS INITIALLY REQUESTED OF THE \$300 MILLION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK, BUT ACTUALLY WITH SOME OF THE CHALLENGE, SOME OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, ONGOING CONVERSATIONS, THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT ACTUALLY INCREASES THAT OVER A TEN-YEAR PERIOD OF TIME AN ADDITIONAL \$150 MILLION. SO TOTAL, WITH THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT, WE ARE ESSENTIALLY DESIGNATING \$450 MILLION THROUGH 2033 TO THESE THREE MAIN PROGRAMS, PRIMARILY MOST OF THE FOCUS ON THE EXPRESSWAYS, THEN THE COUNTY BRIDGE PROGRAM, AND THEN LASTLY THE CITY ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM. WITH THAT, MR. PRESIDENT, I DON'T WANT TO BELABOR THE POINT. I DO KNOW SOME OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE DO WANT TO TALK ON ONE OTHER ITEM, AND I WOULD REITERATE WE DID DISCUSS IT DURING THE BUDGET DEBATE, WHICH IS THE UTILIZATION OF THE CASH RESERVE. AS I MENTIONED WHEN STARTING THE APPROPRIATIONS CHAIRMANSHIP IN 2013, THE CASH RESERVE STOOD AT ROUGHLY 9.5 PERCENT OF GENERAL FUND REVENUES. WITH WHAT WE DID THIS SESSION IN LIGHT OF THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION--THAT INCLUDED LB960--WE END THE BIENNIUM WITH STILL

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A CASH RESERVE I THINK AT A VERY STRONG, HEALTHY BALANCE AT 14.3 PERCENT OF GENERAL FUND REVENUES. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT FUTURE LEGISLATURES, FUTURE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEES WILL NEED TO BE MINDFUL AND CONSISTENTLY WATCH THE UTILIZATION OF THE RESERVE WITH THE FOCUS HOPEFULLY OF CONTINUING THAT POLICY OF TRYING TO KEEP THE RESERVE NEAR 16 PERCENT. BUT WITH WHAT WE DID IN LB960 IT MAKES A VERY STRONG, LOUD, I THINK, DECLARATION THAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS CRITICAL RIGHT NOW IN THIS STATE. IT'S CRITICAL FOR OUR ECONOMY. IT'S CRITICAL PRIMARILY I WOULD SAY FOR A NUMBER OF COMMUNITIES THAT INVOLVE THE EXPRESSWAYS, COUNTY BRIDGES, AND OBVIOUSLY THIS NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, THAT CAN BENEFIT GROWING THEIR ECONOMY LOCALLY WITH WHAT WE KNOW IS DESPERATELY NEEDED INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING TO COMPLETE EXPRESSWAYS, COUNTY BRIDGES, AND OTHER KEY ECONOMIC PROJECTS ACROSS THE STATE. WITH THAT I'D URGE THE BODY TO ADOPT AM2418 AND ADVANCE LB960. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960 LB610]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR MELLO. WAITING TO SPEAK: SENATOR BOLZ, KRIST, STINNER, AND OTHERS. SENATOR BOLZ, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR BOLZ: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. IN MY FOUR YEARS AS AN APPROPRIATIONS MEMBER ONE OF THE WORDS THAT I HAVE SAID TO MYSELF OVER AND OVER AGAIN IS BALANCE, BALANCE, BALANCE, BALANCE. WE GOT TO BALANCE MULTIPLE INTERESTS, MULTIPLE FUNDING STREAMS, MULTIPLE PRESSURES. AND SO I THOUGHT VERY CAREFULLY ABOUT THIS CASH RESERVE TRANSFER AND I DO ULTIMATELY SUPPORT IT. BUT I WANT TO TALK BRIEFLY ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE A TRANSFER OF THIS MAGNITUDE FROM THE CASH RESERVE, WHICH IS UNPRECEDENTED. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE ECONOMY; IT'S AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR THE STATE AS A WHOLE. SO JUST AS WE HAVE TO

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BALANCE THE NEEDS, WE ALSO HAVE TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT PROJECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE AND UNDERSTAND THAT THERE ARE SOMETIMES TARGETED INVESTMENTS THAT MAKE GOOD SENSE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ALWAYS HAVE TO PROTECT OUR CASH RESERVE, AND \$50 MILLION IS A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT. HOWEVER, WHEN WE LOOK AT SOME OF THE UNDERLYING FACTORS THAT GO INTO THE WAY THAT WE THINK ABOUT OUR BUDGET, WE LOOK AT THE REVENUE FORECAST. AND WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE REVENUE FORECASTERS THIS YEAR WAS THAT HOUSING WAS UP, EMPLOYMENT WAS STEADY, AND OVERALL THE ECONOMY WAS STEADY AS SHE GOES. THERE ARE SOME CHALLENGES IN THE AG ECONOMY BUT SOME BRIGHT SPOTS IN I.T. AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCIAL SERVICES. SO I THINK IT IS COMPLETELY CONSISTENT WITH THE IDEA AND THE VALUE OF BALANCE TO BOTH INVEST IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, TO TAKE A LEAP FORWARD, AND TO INVEST IN THE CATALYST THAT IS THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK. AND IT IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE IDEA THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP A CAREFUL, CAUTIOUS EYE ON OUR CASH RESERVE, THAT WE SHOULD PROTECT IT FOR THE FUTURE, AND THAT WE SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT OUR CASH RESERVE ALIGNS WITH WHAT WE ARE LEARNING AND WHAT WE ARE HEARING, NOT ONLY FROM THE REVENUE FORECASTING BOARD, BUT ALSO FROM OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES ABOUT THE FUTURE AND THE ECONOMY, WHETHER IT'S AGRICULTURE IN HASTINGS OR IT'S FINANCIAL SERVICES IN OMAHA. I ALSO WILL JUST BRIEFLY REITERATE THAT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HELPED ME GET ON BOARD WITH THE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE BANK WAS THE MECHANICS OF HOW THIS WILL WORK. AND SENATOR MELLO REFERENCED IT BRIEFLY, BUT I WANT TO REITERATE THAT THERE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT OVERSIGHT FROM THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. ADDITIONALLY, WE REQUIRED THAT THE INVESTMENTS THROUGH THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM GO THROUGH AN ECONOMIC MODELING PROGRAM LIKE REMI TO PROVE THAT THIS INITIATIVE, LIKE OTHER ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVES, DO, IN FACT, HAVE THE FINANCIAL AND JOBS-RELATED BENEFITS THAT WE PERCEIVE THEM TO HAVE. SO, COLLEAGUES, I STAND IN SUPPORT OF LB960, BUT I ALSO STAND IN STRONG SUPPORT OF THE CASH RESERVE FUND

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AND BALANCING MULTIPLE IMPORTANT PRIORITIES FOR THE STATE IN OUR BUDGET. THAT IS ALL THAT I HAVE THIS AFTERNOON. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR BOLZ. SENATOR KRIST, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR KRIST: THANK YOU. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. GOOD AFTERNOON, COLLEAGUES AND NEBRASKA. AND IT'S FORTUITOUS I WOULD FOLLOW SENATOR BOLZ, BECAUSE MY ONLY COMMENT ON THIS BILL, WHEN I WAS ASKED BY THE GOVERNOR AND BY THE ADMINISTRATION IN TERMS OF SUPPORT, I MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT I AM FOR INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES AND FOR THE KINDS OF THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN NEGLECTED IN THIS STATE FOR SEVERAL, SEVERAL YEARS. I HAVE HEARD FROM MY RURAL COUNTERPARTS, COLLEAGUES, AND FROM YOUR CONSTITUENTS HOW ONE BRIDGE BEING DOWN ADDS DAYS TO A CHORE THAT SHOULD TAKE HOURS. BUT I WANT TO JUST REFER YOU, PLEASE, TO PAGE 11 OF THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS. AND I WILL ONCE AGAIN, AS I DID IN OUR LEGISLATIVE OFF-SITE AND SYMPOSIUM, AND I'VE SAID ON THIS FLOOR MANY, MANY, MANY TIMES, I WANT YOU TO FLIP BACK TO THE 2008 TIME FRAME. IN 2008, WE WERE PROJECTED ON AN UPTICK THAT THE ECONOMY LOOKED GOOD, VERY SIMILARLY TO WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW IN OUR FINANCIAL FORECAST. AND THEN LOOK WHAT HAPPENS IN 2009: (WHISTLING SOUND) THAT'S A SPECIAL SESSION. THAT'S WHERE WE HAD TO CUT OVER NEARLY A BILLION DOLLARS OUT OF THE BUDGET TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN. THAT RAINY-DAY FUND IS OUR LIVELIHOOD WHEN IT COMES TO THAT PART OF THAT GRUESOME WORLD IN TERMS OF THE UPS AND DOWNS. IT WAS POINTED OUT TO ME THIS MORNING ALSO, BY SENATOR SEILER, THAT SEEMS TO BE CYCLICAL, ABOUT EVERY EIGHT YEARS. GUESS WHERE WE ARE COMING UP HERE IN THE NEXT COUPLE YEARS? PROTECTING THAT RAINY-DAY FUND SHOULD BE IN ALL OF OUR FOCUS. WE SHOULD NOT LOSE FOCUS WITH THAT.

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BUT ONE MORE THING I'D LIKE TO ADD, AND IF SENATOR MELLO WOULD YIELD, I'D LIKE TO ASK HIM A QUESTION. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR MELLO, WILL YOU YIELD? [LB960]

SENATOR MELLO: OF COURSE. [LB960]

SENATOR KRIST: SO HERE IS MY POINT. YOU REFLECT THINGS IN PERCENTAGES, AND I KNOW THAT THAT'S FINANCIALLY A PERSPECTIVE THAT YOU DO IN APPROPRIATIONS. I HAVE TO CONSTANTLY COMMUNICATE TO MY FOLKS WHO ARE IN BUSINESS: WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO US? HOW MANY DAYS ARE WE FUNDED IN CASE SOMETHING REALLY DOES GO SOUTH? SO YOU TOLD ME ABOUT A RECENT STUDY. COULD YOU JUST RECAP THAT QUICKLY FOR ME, PLEASE? [LB960]

SENATOR MELLO: WELL, I KNOW, SENATOR KRIST, AND I CAN PULL THIS UP AND GIVE IT TO YOU OFF THE MIKE, THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS I KNOW HAD RUN A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT SCENARIOS THAT SHOW NEBRASKA IS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE STATES IN THE COUNTRY RIGHT NOW IN LIGHT OF WHERE OUR CASH RESERVE CURRENTLY STANDS IN REGARDS TO THE UTILIZATION AND/OR US BUILDING TOWARDS THAT 16 PERCENT. AND ACTUALLY IT WAS POINTED OUT TO ME AS WELL, NASBO, THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BUDGET OFFICERS, LISTS NEBRASKA, BASED ON FISCAL YEAR 2015, AS THE FOURTH BEST RANKED STATE IN REGARDS TO HAVING 36.2 PERCENT OF OUR GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES AS PART OF OUR BOTH CASH RESERVE, AS WELL AS OUR MINIMAL RESERVE THAT'S BUILT INTO THE BUDGET PROCESS TO USE MORE FOR CASH FLOW PURPOSES. SO THE ISSUE WAS RAISED OF WHETHER OR NOT THE STATE HAS, GIVE OR TAKE, BETWEEN 90 AND 120 DAYS OF LIQUIDITY. WE DO, BASED ON THE CASH RESERVE AND THE MINIMAL RESERVE, HAVE THAT LIQUIDITY EVEN WITH OBVIOUSLY ADOPTING LB960 MOVING FORWARD. [LB960]

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SENATOR KRIST: AND, COLLEAGUES--THANK YOU, SENATOR MELLO--
COLLEAGUES, I THINK THAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT. I CAN COMMUNICATE BACK
TO MY SMALL AND LARGE BUSINESS AND CORPORATIONS WE HAVE AND WE
HAVE THAT 90-DAY CASH RESERVE THAT WE NEED TO SUSTAIN. PLEASE VOTE IN
FAVOR OF AM2418 AND, OF COURSE, THE UNDERLYING LB960. AND I'D YIELD THE
REST OF MY TIME TO SENATOR CAMPBELL IF SHE'D LIKE IT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR CAMPBELL, YOU'RE YIELDED 1:20. [LB960]

SENATOR CAMPBELL: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. I WANTED TO GIVE A SHOUT-
OUT TO FORMER SENATOR TIM GAY. IN THE SECOND YEAR THAT I WAS IN THE
LEGISLATURE, SENATOR GAY SAID, LET'S SPEND THIS SUMMER AND LET'S
DEVELOP AN INFRASTRUCTURE BANK. OUR INFRASTRUCTURE BANK LOOKS
PRETTY RUDIMENTARY COMPARED TO WHAT SENATOR SMITH, THE
TRANSPORTATION AND APPROPRIATIONS CAME UP WITH. FINANCING ROADS IS
WHAT I CALL LONG-TERM PLANNING AND LONG-TERM FINANCING, AND IT IS
CERTAINLY REPRESENTED IN THE BILL BEFORE US, AND WOULD URGE YOUR
SUPPORT OF THE UNDERLYING AMENDMENT AND THE MAINLINE BILL. THANK
YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR CAMPBELL, MELLO, AND KRIST.
SENATOR STINNER, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR STINNER: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATURE, I STAND IN SUPPORT OF LB960 AND ITS AM2418. I DO WANT TO
THANK SENATOR SMITH FOR HIS BULL-DOGGED DETERMINATION RELATIVE TO
THIS BILL. I WANT TO THANK TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE FOR CONDUCTING
A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE STATE OF NEBRASKA'S HIGHWAY SYSTEM
THIS SUMMER. AND CERTAINLY I WANT TO THANK GOVERNOR RICKETTS FOR
MAKING THIS A PRIORITY AND AN INITIATIVE TO GROW NEBRASKA.
NEBRASKA'S THREE LARGEST INDUSTRIES--AGRICULTURE, MANUFACTURING,
AND TOURISM--ALL RELY ON A GOOD TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO BE

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SUCCESSFUL. THE MAIN FOCUS OF LB960 IS ON CREATING AN INFRASTRUCTURE BANK FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE DESIGNATED EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM AND FEDERALLY DESIGNATED HIGH-PRIORITY CORRIDORS. I'M NOT SURE ANYTHING THAT WE DO AS LEGISLATORS CAN BE ANY MORE IMPACTFUL ON OUR ECONOMY, BOTH IN THE SHORT AND LONG TERM, THAN EXPRESSWAY CONSTRUCTION AND COMPLETION OF THIS LONG-PROMISED ROADWAYS. IT WAS DESCRIBED TO ME ONCE THAT THESE EXPRESSWAYS WERE LIKE ARTERIES THAT PUMP BLOOD TO BADLY NEEDED AREAS. THEY ARE MONEY PIPELINES, PROVIDING BOTH SHORT- AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE REGIONS. THE \$450 MILLION INITIATIVE, COUPLED WITH LB610 TAX FUNDS OF \$50 MILLION FLOWING ANNUALLY TO OUR CITIES AND COUNTIES, ALONG WITH \$70 MILLION FROM THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY PROGRAM OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WILL BE JUST THE STIMULUS WE NEED IN OUR STATE TO OFFSET OUR SAGGING AG ECONOMY. IN MY DISTRICT, THE HEARTLAND EXPRESSWAY IS THE MIDDLE SECTION OF THE LARGER GREAT PLAINS INTERNATIONAL TRADE CORRIDOR THAT EXTENDS FROM MEXICO TO CANADA, AND IS A MEMBER OF A MULTISTATE INTERNATIONAL ROUTE ALLIANCE WITH THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT EXPRESSWAY IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH DAKOTA TO CANADA, AND THE PORTS OF THE PLAINS CORRIDOR THAT EXTENDS FROM LIMON, COLORADO, TO MEXICO. CONGRESS, IN THE FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION EQUITY ACT FOR THE 21st CENTURY, DESIGNATED THIS ENTIRE ROUTE AND THESE THREE ORGANIZATIONS AS ONE OF 45 HIGH-PRIORITY CORRIDORS IN THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEMS ACT IN 1998. IN MY DISTRICT, THE HEARTLAND EXPRESSWAY IS CRITICAL TO THE PANHANDLE OF NEBRASKA. THERE ARE PEOPLE IN MY DISTRICT AND THROUGHOUT OUR STATE WHO HAVE WAITED FOR OVER 30 YEARS FOR THIS PROJECT TO BE COMPLETED. I BELIEVE IT IS TIME TO ACCELERATE NEBRASKA AND GET THESE PROJECTS COMPLETED. PLEASE VOTE GREEN ON LB960 AND AM2418. THANK YOU. [LB960 LB610]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR STINNER. WAITING TO SPEAK:
SENATOR SULLIVAN, FRIESEN, PANSING BROOKS, JOHNSON, AND OTHERS.
SENATOR SULLIVAN, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

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SENATOR SULLIVAN: THANK YOU, SENATOR SCHEER. GOOD AFTERNOON, COLLEAGUES. WHEN I FIRST LEARNED OF LB960, I WAS SHYING AWAY FROM IT QUITE ACTIVELY BECAUSE I JUST COULDN'T SEE REALISTICALLY TAKING THAT MANY DOLLARS OUT OF THE CASH RESERVE. SO I REALLY AM PLEASED AND COMMEND THE...COMPLIMENT THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FOR THEIR HARD WORK IN CRAFTING SOMETHING THAT I DO SUPPORT RIGHT NOW. BUT ALONG THOSE LINES, AND I'M ALWAYS LOOKING OUT FOR WHAT KINDS OF BENEFITS THIS MEANS FOR RURAL NEBRASKA, PARTICULARLY MY DISTRICT, SO I WAS VERY PLEASED TO SEE THE COMPONENT ABOUT THE COUNTY BRIDGE MATCHING PROGRAM, BUT DO HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS AND I WONDERED IF SENATOR SMITH WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO YIELD. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR SMITH, WOULD YOU PLEASE YIELD? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: YES, I WILL. [LB960]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH. FIRST OF ALL, I BELIEVE \$40 MILLION IS DESIGNATED. BUT IS THAT FOR THE...TO BE SPREAD OUT OVER THE COMPLETE TIME UNTIL SUNSET OF THIS BILL? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: THROUGH 2023 FOR THE MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE BRIDGES. [LB960]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: AND WHILE IT'S VOLUNTARY, THEN IS THERE GOING TO BE SOME ATTEMPT TO APPORTION THAT OUT OVER TIME OR DO THEY...IS IT JUST FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE? OR HOW EXACTLY ARE THOSE DOLLARS GOING TO BE DISTRIBUTED? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: SENATOR SULLIVAN, NDOR WILL WORK WITH NACO TO PUT TOGETHER A PLAN FOR EXACTLY WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE, AND THAT PLAN WILL COME BACK BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AND THE

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TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE BEFORE DECEMBER 1 OF THIS YEAR. AND I BELIEVE THAT THE ACTUAL LOGISTICS AS TO HOW THAT MONEY WILL BE SPREAD OUT OVER TIME WILL BE BROUGHT TO US AT THAT TIME. [LB960]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: ONE OF THE THINGS THAT I'VE RUN INTO IN MY DISTRICT, AND TRULY THERE ARE MANY CRITICAL COUNTY BRIDGE PROJECTS THAT ARE IN NEED, DESPERATE NEED, BUT A COUPLE THAT I'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN SINCE I'VE BEEN DOWN HERE, ONE IN PARTICULAR, IT WAS JUST...THE REQUIREMENTS WERE SO ONEROUS THAT THE COUNTY ENDED UP SPENDING SO MUCH MORE THAN THEY REALLY NEEDED TO, TO PUT IN A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION, WHETHER IT WOULD BE A BRIDGE OR A CULVERT. SO IS THERE ANY DISCUSSION ON HOW TO MAKE THESE PROJECTS MORE MANAGEABLE AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: YES, SENATOR SULLIVAN, I BELIEVE THAT THAT DISCUSSION WILL BE ONGOING, AND I BELIEVE THAT THAT WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD OF TIME TO COME BACK WITH THAT PARTICULAR PLAN. [LB960]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: AND LASTLY, I KNOW THAT THIS DOESN'T CONNECT...PERTAIN TO THE COUNTY BRIDGE PROGRAM, BUT THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM, CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT YOU MIGHT SEE OF SOME OF THE PROJECTS THAT WOULD BE PRIORITIZED? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: SURE. SENATOR SULLIVAN, SOMETIMES IN OUR CITIES OR OUR MORE POPULATED AREAS THERE MAY BE AN INFRASTRUCTURE-RELATED PROJECT THAT COULD BE AN INTERCHANGE OR A SPUR THAT IS NEEDED BY A PARTICULAR BUSINESS TO MAKE A PARTICULAR PIECE OF LAND MORE REASONABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT. AND OFTENTIMES THE CITY DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO BE ABLE TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS THAT PROJECT TO MAKE IT FEASIBLE FOR THE BUSINESS THAT IS BRINGING THEM JOBS. THIS IS A PLACE WHERE THEY CAN APPLY AND POSSIBLY RECEIVE MATCHING FUNDS TO

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HELP WITH MAYBE TAKING A LOW-VOLUME INTERCHANGE AND MAKING IT A HIGH-VOLUME INTERCHANGE OR DEVELOPMENT OR CREATING A SPUR. [LB960]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: THANK YOU. WILL THERE BE ANY ATTEMPT TO SPREAD THAT BENEFIT AROUND, ACROSS THE STATE, AND PARTICULARLY OUT TO RURAL COMMUNITIES THAT MIGHT BE WANTING TO DO THE SAME THING? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: ABSOLUTELY. AND WE WOULD HOPE THAT THIS WOULD BENEFIT ALL POPULATED AREAS ACROSS THE STATE. YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT. OUR RURAL COMMUNITIES NEED IT AS MUCH AS OUR MAJOR POPULATION AREAS. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: ONE MINUTE. [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: AND SO THAT WILL BE DEVELOPED DURING THIS INTERIM PERIOD, AS WELL, AS EXACTLY HOW THOSE SELECTIONS ARE MADE. [LB960]

SENATOR SULLIVAN: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH, FOR ANSWERING THOSE QUESTIONS. AND AGAIN, I STAND IN SUPPORT OF AM2418 AND LB960. THANK YOU. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH. THANK YOU, SENATOR SULLIVAN. SENATOR FRIESEN, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR FRIESEN: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. I THINK AT THIS POINT EVERYBODY WILL RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF LB610 AND THE INCREASE IN THE GAS TAX THAT WE DID LAST YEAR. ALTHOUGH I WOULD HAVE RATHER SEEN \$100 MILLION PULLED OUT OF THE CASH RESERVE, I WILL SETTLE FOR \$50 MILLION. WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE INFRASTRUCTURE, AT THIS STATE, AND HOW FAR BEHIND WE ARE--AND I DO FEEL THAT MAINTAINING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE IS ONE OF THE CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE--I THINK THIS BILL COVERS A LOT OF THAT TERRITORY. WHEN WE LOOK AT WHAT IT DOES FOR

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COUNTIES AND FOR THE CITIES, THAT'S A MINOR PIECE OF THE LARGE PUZZLE THAT THIS ACCOMPLISHES. WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM FOR A LOT OF YEARS, AND IT'S BEEN AT A COMPLETE STANDSTILL NOW FOR OVER TEN YEARS. I THINK THE CITIZENS OF THE STATE HAVE EXPECTED THAT TO GET FINISHED AND I THINK AT THIS TIME NOW IT WILL FINALLY GET FINISHED, ALTHOUGH WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO WAIT. THIS CAN'T ALL BE DONE AT ONCE. THERE IS AT LEAST A PLAN IN PLACE NOW THAT FINISHES THE PROJECT. WHEN WE TALK ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL NEBRASKA, WITHOUT ROADS, WITHOUT GOOD ROADS, BRIDGES, WE HAVE A TREMENDOUS DIFFICULTY IN ATTRACTING COMPANIES TO COME OUT. SO THIS, TO ME THIS IS CRITICAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE RURAL NEBRASKA, BUT THIS IS STILL ONLY A SMALL PIECE OF THE PUZZLE WHEN WE LOOK AT OUR TAX POLICY GOING FORWARD IN THIS STATE. SO I STRONGLY SUPPORT LB960 AND AM2418. I COMMEND THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FOR WORKING OUT AN AGREEMENT. AND THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR FRIESEN. SENATOR PANSING BROOKS, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR PANSING BROOKS: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. I, TOO, RISE IN SUPPORT OF LB960 AND THE UNDERLYING AMENDMENT. LAST YEAR SENATOR SMITH'S HIGHLY IMPORTANT BILL ON MOTOR FUEL TAX GAVE 2 CENTS TO THE CITIES, 2 CENTS TO THE COUNTIES, AND 2 CENTS TO THE STATE. NOW 2 CENTS OF THE STATE'S MOTOR FUEL TAX WILL BE USED FOR OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, OUR INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS THIS WHOLE STATE. I AM SO HAPPY AND SO GLAD THAT OUR LEGISLATURE CAN WORK WITH THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE TO USE THIS MOTOR FUEL TAX. IT'S CRITICAL TO OUR NEEDS. ROADS ARE CRITICAL TO OUR NEEDS. WHEN I WAS GOING...WHEN I WAS CAMPAIGNING AND GOING DOOR TO DOOR, I TALKED ABOUT A THREE-LEGGED STOOL, AND THAT STOOL HAD TO DO WITH OUR ECONOMICS, OUR PEOPLE, AND OUR INFRASTRUCTURE. JUST LIKE IN OUR OWN HOMES, IF OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, IF OUR HOUSE IS FALLING APART, WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THAT. WE HAVE TO...IF THERE'S WATER COMING IN

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FROM THE ROOF, WE HAVE TO IMMEDIATELY DEAL WITH THAT. IF OUR DRIVEWAY IS FALLING APART AND WE CAN'T DRIVE ON IT, WE HAVE TO IMMEDIATELY DEAL WITH THAT AND BALANCE HOW WE'RE GOING TO USE OUR DOLLARS. AND THOSE...THAT BALANCE COMES WITH DETERMINING WHETHER OR NOT...HOW WE SPEND MONEY IN OUR FAMILIES AND WHETHER OR NOT WE SPEND EXTRA MONEY FOR CLOTHES OR NOT. WE HAVE TO BALANCE ALL OF THOSE THINGS. AND THOSE SAME THREE THINGS HAVE TO BE BALANCED WITHIN THE STATE: OUR INFRASTRUCTURE, OUR PEOPLE, THE DOLLARS THAT WE SPEND ON OUR PEOPLE, AND OUR ECONOMIC DOLLARS, HOW WE'RE GOING TO SPEND OUR DOLLARS MOST WISELY THAT WE'RE GIVEN BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE. IT'S CRITICAL THAT WE HAVE SAFE BRIDGES TO OUR ECONOMY. IT'S CRITICAL THAT WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE SAFE ROADS AND WAYS FOR BUSINESS AND...TO DEVELOP AND FOR PRODUCTION TO FLOURISH. THE DOLLARS, IT'S MY UNDERSTANDING, OFTEN ARE CONSIDERED TO RETURN SEVEN TIMES OVER. THIS OPPORTUNITY THAT WE'RE BEING PRESENTED BY SENATOR SMITH IS ACTUALLY...CONSTITUTES A SIGNIFICANT STIMULUS TO OUR ECONOMY. AS WE BUILD, COMMUNITIES WILL GROW AND CITIZENS WILL THRIVE. THE MONEY THAT'S BEING COLLECTED WILL GO TO THE BETTERMENT OF ALL NEBRASKANS AND CONSTITUTE ACROSS THE STATE \$450 MILLION FOR ROADS. I JUST CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING RIGHT NOW THAT'S MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF OUR STATE. WE HAVE GOT TO DEAL WITH THE CRUMBLING BRIDGES AND WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH THOSE THREE LEGS OF THE STOOL. SO I WANT TO THANK SENATOR SMITH FOR BRINGING THIS BILL FORWARD AND I HOPE THAT YOU WILL ALL VOTE FOR LB960 AND THAT WE WILL HELP OUR BUSINESSES GROW, OUR COMMUNITIES TO GROW, AND OUR CITIZENS TO THRIVE. THANK YOU SO MUCH, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR PANSING BROOKS. SENATOR JOHNSON, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR JOHNSON: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. WHEN I WAS LIVING IN POLK COUNTY, I WAS ON THE NEBRASKA COMMITTEE FOR THE COMPLETION OF

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HIGHWAY 81 ALL THE WAY FROM TEXAS UP TO CANADA, AND PART OF THAT IS THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM. THAT WAS BACK IN THE '90s. I WAS AT A MEETING IN OMAHA WITH...WHEN I WAS A CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, THE FIRST DISCUSSION WITH SENATOR FISCHER, THAT BECAME LB84 AND I SUPPORTED THAT. I COSIGNED THE BONDING BILL FOR TRANSPORTATION A COUPLE YEARS AGO, AND WE FOUND OUT THAT BONDING IS NOT WHAT WE WANT TO DO AND WE LEARNED THAT AGAIN THIS YEAR WITH THE NRD PROJECT OR BONDING. SO THAT'S OFF THE TABLE. AND NOW WE HAVE THIS BEFORE US, AND I SUPPORT IT. I DO HAVE A QUESTION OF SENATOR SMITH IF HE WOULD YIELD. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR SMITH, WOULD YOU PLEASE YIELD? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: YES, I WILL. [LB960]

SENATOR JOHNSON: I'VE HEARD...YESTERDAY ON THE GOVERNOR'S FLY AROUND, THE TOP PRIORITY WAS PROPERTY TAX. THE SECOND WAS TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND LB960. AND IT WAS TALKED A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE PROCESS THAT WE WILL BE LOOKING AT WHICH CUTS OFF SOME TIME AS PROJECTS CAN BE DEVELOPED AND CONSTRUCTED AND COMPLETED, AND I THINK THE VALUE OF THAT IS TRYING TO MATCH TODAY'S DOLLARS WITH TODAY'S PROJECT COST. COULD YOU EXPLAIN A LITTLE BIT WHAT THAT PROJECT OR HOW THAT PROCESS WOULD WORK? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: WELL, THERE ARE SOME INNOVATIVE DELIVERY METHODS THAT ARE USED BY OTHER STATES, AND I THINK NEBRASKA HAS LAGGED BEHIND IN THIS AREA FOR SOME TIME, AND IT BRINGS US UP TO AT LEAST THE SAME POINT THAT MANY OTHER STATES ARE AT IN DESIGN DELIVERY METHODS. AND SO THESE ARE JUST...YOU KNOW, IT'S CALLED DESIGN-BUILD OR CONSTRUCTION MANAGER, AND BASICALLY IT HELPS TO SHORTEN THE TIME FRAME BETWEEN THE BIDDING AND THE DESIGN AND THE COMPLETION AND THE CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION OF A PROJECT. BUT IT'S NOT RIGHT FOR EVERY PROJECT. AND SO THAT'S WHERE WE'RE GOING TO PUT THIS INTO THE

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HANDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS UNDER THE CAPABLE OVERSIGHT OF DIRECTOR SCHNEWEIS AND THEY WILL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISIONS AS TO WHEN TO IMPLEMENT THE USE OF THE DESIGN-BUILD CRITERIA. [LB960]

SENATOR JOHNSON: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH. I'M AWARE OF THAT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, THE DESIGN-BUILD. I'VE SEEN SOME PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED ON THAT AND, I WOULD SAY, COMPLETED ON TIME AND IN THE RIGHT MANNER. AND SO THANK YOU FOR THAT EXPLANATION. AND I SUPPORT LB960. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH AND SENATOR JOHNSON. SENATOR SCHUMACHER, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHUMACHER: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE BODY. I THINK IN LAST YEAR'S DEBATE I WAS LAMENTING THAT IT WASN'T LIKE THE '60s WHEN WE GOT THINGS DONE AND HOW WE NEEDED TO MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN AND I SAID WE NEED TO GO TO THE MOON AND BUILD ROADS. SOMEHOW THAT DIDN'T COME OUT RIGHT. AND I LOOK AT THE MOON EVERY NIGHT AND SEE IF WE'RE STILL BUILDING THE ROADS UP THERE. WOULD SENATOR SMITH YIELD TO A QUESTION OR TWO? [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR SMITH, WOULD YOU PLEASE YIELD? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: YES, I WILL. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHUMACHER: SENATOR SMITH, I NOTICED THAT THE BILL CALLS FOR THE MAXIMUM USE OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL FUNDING. ARE YOU AT ALL CONCERNED THAT THIS MIGHT BANKRUPT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: I'M SORRY, I MISSED THE LAST PART OF YOUR QUESTION. [LB960]

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SENATOR SCHUMACHER: ARE YOU AT ALL CONCERNED THAT THIS MIGHT BANKRUPT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, LIKE IT WOULD IF WE EXPANDED MEDICAID? [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: NO, I DO NOT BELIEVE SO, SENATOR. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHUMACHER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH, FOR THAT OBSERVATION. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE THE LATE 1980s, AND WE AREN'T MAKING VERY FAST HEADWAY. (YEAR) 2033 IS A LONG, LONG WAY OFF. I PROBABLY WON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT WE DID HERE IN 2033 IF MY FAMILY HISTORY HAS ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT. THERE IS A WAY TO BE CREATIVE IN THIS ENVIRONMENT, FAR MORE CREATIVE THAN JUST TAKING \$50 MILLION OUT OF A CASH RESERVE IN AN UNSTABLE TIME, FAR MORE CREATIVE THAN MOVING JUST \$50 MILLION INTO THE PROJECT. WE HAVE ENORMOUS RESERVES IN THIS STATE IN PRIVATE HANDS. WHY DON'T WE MOBILIZE THE MONEY THAT IS SITTING IN OUR SAVERS' BANK ACCOUNTS, DRAWING 0 PERCENT INTEREST--MAYBE IF WE FOLLOW THE EUROPEANS' NEGATIVE INTEREST--AND PUT IT TO WORK? AND WE CAN DO THAT. AND I'M GOING TO SPEND JUST A SECOND TALKING ABOUT A BILL THAT'S BEEN IN REVENUE COMMITTEE. AT ONE TIME THE BILL WAS ON THIS FLOOR AND ALMOST GOT PASSED ON GENERAL READING. WHAT IT IS, IS A MECHANISM WHEREBY A TAXPAYER--AND THE BILL THAT'S IN REVENUE COMMITTEE IS LIMITED TO \$10,000 A YEAR--CAN OVERPAY YOUR INCOME TAXES, WRITE AN EXTRA CHECK TO THE GOVERNMENT. IT'S NOT A DEBT OF THE STATE. AND YOU GET...IT IS A CREDIT AGAINST YOUR FUTURE TAX FIVE YEARS HENCE. FIVE YEARS LATER YOU CAN CLAIM YOUR OVERPAYMENT BACK WITH INTEREST AT THE TEN-YEAR FEDERAL RATE, WHICH RIGHT NOW IS LESS THAN 2 PERCENT, ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION. WE CAN MOBILIZE AN EXTRA \$350 MILLION USING THAT TECHNIQUE OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD AND COMPLETE THIS ROAD SYSTEM ON A REALLY ACCELERATED BASIS. AND THE COST, ASSUMING THAT WE...THE ECONOMY DOESN'T CHANGE MUCH, AND IT PROBABLY WON'T, IT WILL END UP RUNNING, IN THOSE INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS AND THAT MINUSCULE BUT POSITIVE RATE OF INTEREST,

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ABOUT \$15 MILLION TO \$18 MILLION A YEAR. THAT'S IT. THAT'S AN ACCEPTABLE THING. AND THAT MONEY, THE \$15 MILLION TO \$18 MILLION A YEAR, BECAUSE WE HAVE THE ROAD SYSTEM FINISHED YEARS AHEAD OF TIME, WILL BE...

[LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: ONE MINUTE. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHUMACHER: ...MORE THAN PAID BACK FROM THE ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND SAVINGS ON CREATING THOSE ROADS DOWN THE ROAD AND LATER. WE HAVE TO HELP OUR ROADS OUT, BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO HELP THE PEOPLE WHO SAVE MONEY OUT AND GIVE THEM SOMETHING IN RETURN FOR THEIR MONEY. WE COULD ALL WIN BY BEING MORE CREATIVE THAN SIMPLY DIPPING INTO THE CASH RESERVE BY \$50 MILLION AND SEEING WHAT WE CAN SQUEEZE OUT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THERE'S A LOT OF POTENTIAL IN THIS BILL, BUT I THINK WE CAN DO EVEN BETTER IF WE ARE CREATIVE; PROBABLY WON'T BE BUT, NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS MORE AND BETTER WAYS TO DO THINGS. THANK YOU. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SCHUMACHER. SENATOR DAVIS, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR DAVIS: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. LIKE ALL MY COLLEAGUES HERE ON THE FLOOR, I RISE IN SUPPORT OF THIS BILL. MY DAD WAS ON THE HIGHWAY COMMISSION BACK IN THE '60s. AND AS YOU ALL MAY KNOW, OR IF YOU DON'T IT'S AN INTERESTING POINT, THAT NEBRASKA I BELIEVE WAS THE FIRST STATE TO GET ITS INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM COMPLETED. THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEMS THAT SENATOR STINNER DID SUCH A GREAT JOB TALKING ABOUT WERE DESIGNED AND THE PLAN WAS TO GET THOSE COMPLETED 20 YEARS AGO IN THE '80s, STILL NOT COMPLETED TO THIS DAY. SENATOR FRIESEN AND I WERE...AND SENATOR SMITH ATTENDED ALL THE HEARINGS THIS SUMMER THAT TOOK PLACE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ROADS ACROSS THE STATE AND I HAVE TO SAY I'M VERY IMPRESSED WITH THE NEW DIRECTOR OF ROADS KYLE

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SCHNEWEIS, A VERY INNOVATIVE, INTELLIGENT MAN WHO'S GOING TO DO A GREAT JOB FOR US IN THE STATE OF NEBRASKA. I WANT TO THANK SENATOR SMITH FOR THE LEADERSHIP THAT HE HAS DEMONSTRATED WITH THIS BILL. AND LIKE SENATOR FRIESEN, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT BE \$100 MILLION OR \$150 MILLION SO WE CAN GET THE EXPRESSWAYS DONE AND OUR BRIDGE FUND UP AND RUNNING, TAKE CARE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS THAT WE HAVE IN THIS STATE. I UNDERSTAND THAT'S JUST NOT GOING TO HAPPEN THIS YEAR, BUT I DON'T THINK WE OUGHT TO SHOVE THAT DOWN THE ROAD A LONG WAY. THESE EXPRESSWAYS, AND I LEARNED THIS, THIS SUMMER--I ALREADY KNEW IT BECAUSE IT'S THE TOP ISSUE IN BOX BUTTE AND DAWES COUNTY THAT I HEAR ABOUT FROM CONSTITUENTS EXCEPT FOR PROPERTY TAXES, AND YOU CAN SEE WHY IT'S NUMBER TWO--BUT COMPLETION OF THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM OPENS UP ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES TO RURAL NEBRASKA THAT AREN'T THERE NOW. WHEN A BUSINESS WANTS TO MOVE INTO A COMMUNITY, IT HAS A CHECKLIST. AND IF YOU'RE NOT ON A DIVIDED HIGHWAY, A LOT OF TIMES YOU'RE TAKEN OFF THAT CHECKLIST. WHEN WE WERE IN NORFOLK THIS SUMMER WE HEARD FROM NUCOR, WE HEARD FROM A LOT OF ASSOCIATED BUSINESSES IN NORFOLK ABOUT THE URGENCY AND THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXPRESSWAY SYSTEM FROM CATTLE FEEDERS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTIES. AND WE WERE PRESENTED WITH DATA AND EVIDENCE ABOUT THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS TO THE STATE BY GETTING IT DONE. WE'VE HAD NOTHING DONE REALLY WITH OUR ROADS FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS. SENATOR FISCHER REALIZED THE NEED AND PUT FORWARD LB84, WHICH HAS BEEN A GREAT ADDITION. WE'RE GETTING THINGS DONE NOW THAT HAVE BEEN IN THE... "MOTHBALLED" FOR A LONG, LONG TIME. AND WITH THAT I WOULD JUST AGAIN SAY THANK YOU TO SENATOR SMITH SO MUCH FOR HIS LEADERSHIP, FOR THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE WORKING THROUGH THIS RESOLUTION, AND URGE YOU ALL TO SUPPORT THE BILL AND GET OUR INFRASTRUCTURE BANK GOING AND COMPLETE OUR HIGHWAYS. THANK YOU. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR DAVIS. SENATOR GROENE, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

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SENATOR GROENE: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. I APPRECIATE SENATOR SMITH'S WORK ON THIS. HE'S MORE PATIENT THAN I AM AND HE WORKS HARD TO COME TO COMPROMISE. THE ORIGINAL BILL THERE WAS...I WOULD HAVE PROBABLY FILIBUSTERED IT AT \$150 MILLION, OR ATTEMPTED TO, BECAUSE I'M A BIG, FIRM BELIEVER OF USER TAX, AND THAT'S WHAT GAS TAX IS. BUT THE COMPROMISE IS, AS THEY SAY IN POLITICS, IT'S BEARABLE. SO I'LL SUPPORT LB960 AS LONG AS \$50 MILLION IS THE ONLY MONEY THAT COMES OUT OF MY INCOME AND SALES TAXES TO BUILD ROADS AND THE REST OF IT IS FUNDED BY USER TAXES AND FUEL TAXES. BUT WE'VE TALKED A LOT HERE ABOUT DISREPAIR OF THE ROADS. WELL, LET ME TELL YOU, FOLKS, I DROVE THE WHOLE HIGH PLAINS AND NEBRASKA HAS DONE A GOOD JOB WITH THEIR ROADS. THEY ARE NOT IN DISREPAIR; BRIDGES, YES, MAINLY BECAUSE WE'RE GETTING BIGGER, AGRICULTURE IS GETTING BIGGER, EQUIPMENT IS GETTING BIGGER. THEY JUST CAN'T HANDLE WHAT WE HAVE OUT THERE NOW. BUT THE TAXPAYERS REMEMBER NOW AND IN ONE MORE YEAR WE'LL BE 31.5 CENTS ON FUEL TAXES. THAT'S THE HIGHEST IN THE REGION BY FAR. AND WE GENERATE \$410 MILLION A YEAR FROM THAT FUEL TAX THAT WE SPEND EVERY YEAR. AND SENATOR FISCHER'S LB84, THE STATE'S PORTION IS \$63 MILLION. THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BUILT THESE EXPRESSWAYS. AND THEN WE GET ANOTHER \$200-AND-SOME MILLION A YEAR FROM THE FEDS. SO IT'S NOT CHICKEN CHANGE OR CHUMP CHANGE OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT. TAXPAYERS HAVE HISTORICALLY IN THIS STATE SUPPORTED THEIR ROADS, SO I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO ACT LIKE WE'VE SAVED THE DAY. DOES THIS ACCELERATE IT? I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY'RE GOING TO GET THE EMPLOYEES TO DO THIS, BECAUSE WE'RE LOW UNEMPLOYMENT, AND WHAT CONSTRUCTION COMPANY CAN BUILD THAT ROAD THAT QUICK NOW ONCE WE INFUSE THE MONEY INTO IT, BUT I'M WAITING TO SEE HOW THAT HAPPENS. BUT \$50 MILLION IS ACCOUNTABLE. WE CAN ACCOUNT FOR THAT EASIER. IT'S NO RUSH TO SPEND IT. AND THEN AS IT TRICKLES IN OR COMES IN, NOT A TRICKLE, A PRETTY GOOD FLOW OF 2 CENTS A GALLON TAX IN THE FUTURE, IT MAKES SENSE. BUT I'M STILL CURIOUS WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO WITH THE \$63 MILLION OF LB84. WHERE IS THAT GOING NOW? IS THAT ALSO STILL MEANT FOR EXPRESSWAYS OR

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WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH IT? OR DO WE NEED IT ANYMORE? I THINK SENATOR KRIST DROPPED A BILL TO GET RID OF THAT AT ONE TIME. BUT I CAN LIVE WITH THIS, AND AS 1 SENATOR OUT OF 49, KNOWING THAT MY TAXPAYERS ARE PAYING A LOT FOR FUEL TAX RIGHT NOW. ALSO AN IDEA THAT I'VE BEEN PUSHING BECAUSE I TRAVEL THE HIGH PLAINS IS IN CERTAIN AREAS WE REALLY DON'T NEED A FOUR-LANE EXPRESSWAY. THERE'S THESE...THE CONCEPT OF THE "SUPER TWOS," COLORADO USES IT, KANSAS USES IT, WYOMING USES IT, WHERE EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE IT'S A FOUR-LANE ON HILLS AND AREAS WHERE DRIVERS BECOME FRUSTRATED OR ACCIDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO HAPPEN, WHERE EVERY TEN MILES OR SO YOU TURN IT INTO A FOUR LANE GOING UP THE HILLS. THAT MAKES SENSE TO ME. HIGHWAY 50 IN KANSAS IS WELL TRAVELED, AND THEY HAVE DONE THAT THERE, AND IT KEEPS THE FLOW OF TRAFFIC GOING, PLUS THE COST IS A LOT LESS FOR MAINTENANCE AND FOR BUILDING. BUT I WOULD HOPE THE STATE OF NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS LOOKS AT THAT INSTEAD OF PUTTING A LOT OF CONCRETE OUT THERE THAT'S NOT NECESSARY. SO I THANK SENATOR SMITH FOR HIS EFFORTS--AND I CAN LIVE WITH THIS--AND SENATOR MELLO FOR WORKING WITH SENATOR SMITH AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. AND LET'S PUT THIS ON THE BACK BURNER. LET'S SEE HOW THIS WORKS NOW BEFORE WE COME BACK AND START THROWING MORE MONEY AT IT IN THE FUTURE. LET'S SEE IF IT ACTUALLY WORKS. CAN WE DO THAT ONCE? WE NEVER ALLOWED SENATOR FISCHER'S BILL TO WORK COMPLETELY. APPARENTLY IT DIDN'T. BUT THANK YOU. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR GROENE. SENATOR KINTNER, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960]

SENATOR KINTNER: WELL, THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. YOU KNOW, I WATCHED HOW HARD SENATOR MELLO WORKED TO HAMMER OUT SOME OF THE DETAILS ON THIS BILL. AND I DO WANT TO THANK SENATOR MELLO FOR HIS HARD WORK IN SHUTTLEING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN SENATOR SMITH, THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, APPROPRIATIONS, GIVING US UPDATES, TELLING US WHERE IT WAS GOING, THEN TRYING TO GET US ALL ON BOARD. THAT WASN'T AN EASY THING

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TO DO. BUT IT DID COME OUT 9-0, SO EVERY ONE OF US SUPPORTED IT. SO I WANT TO THANK SENATOR MELLO FOR HIS HARD WORK AND HIS HENRY KISSINGER-LIKE ABILITY TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER. I WANT TO THANK SENATOR SMITH FOR HIS INTRODUCING THIS BILL, SENATOR BRASCH FOR MAKING IT A PRIORITY. AND I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU, THERE'S THREE THINGS THAT WE HAVE TO DO, THE PEOPLE DEMAND US TO DO. THEY WANT ROADS, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC SAFETY. THIS IS ONE OF THE CORE THINGS THAT WE DO, THAT WE GET JUDGED ON, AND WE'VE GOT TO GET THIS RIGHT. AND I THINK THIS IS A GREAT STEP MOVING FORWARD TO GET IT RIGHT. AND WE'VE GOT A LOT OF MONEY SITTING THERE IN THE RAINY-DAY FUND IN THE CASH RESERVE FUND, IN MY OPINION TOO MUCH MONEY. SO THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO BRING THAT FUND DOWN A LITTLE BIT. SO I ENCOURAGE ALL MY COLLEAGUES HERE TO VOTE FOR THIS AND VOTE QUICKLY FOR IT AND WE CAN GET MOVING HERE. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR KINTNER. SENATOR MELLO, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED TO CLOSE ON THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT. [LB960]

SENATOR MELLO: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE. AS YOU HEARD, THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENT MAKES A NUMBER OF CHANGES TO THE BILL THAT WERE WORKED OUT BETWEEN SENATOR SMITH, THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE, AND GOVERNOR RICKETTS AND HIS ADMINISTRATION. AS I REITERATED, I'M VERY GRATEFUL FOR EVERYONE COMING TO THE TABLE THROUGHOUT THE SESSION TO ENSURE WE COULD SEE SOME SUCCESS MOVING FORWARD WITH LB960. AND WITH THAT I'D URGE THE BODY TO ADVANCE AM2418. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR MELLO. THE QUESTION IS, SHALL THE COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS TO LB960 BE ADOPTED? ALL THOSE IN FAVOR VOTE AYE; ALL THOSE OPPOSED VOTE NAY. HAVE ALL VOTED THAT WISH TO? MR. CLERK. [LB960]

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CLERK: 38 AYES, 0 NAYS ON ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THE AMENDMENT PASSES. SENATOR SMITH, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED TO CLOSE ON LB960. [LB960]

SENATOR SMITH: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. AND THANK YOU FOR THE CONVERSATIONS ON LB960, COLLEAGUES, AND THE UNDERLYING AMENDMENT. I APPRECIATE THAT LAST VOTE. AGAIN I JUST WANT TO GO THROUGH VERY QUICKLY AND SAY HOW MUCH I DO APPRECIATE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE GOVERNOR IN SUPPORTING THIS BILL AND PARTNERING ON THIS BILL. IT WAS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT, COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AND WITHOUT SENATOR BRASCH PRIORITIZING THIS BILL. ALSO, I WANT TO THANK SENATOR MELLO. IT HAS BEEN A PLEASURE WORKING WITH SENATOR MELLO AND THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AS WE WORKED THROUGH THAT LAST AMENDMENT. AND THEN ALSO, YOU KNOW, WE HAVE A GREAT NEW TREASURER IN OUR STATE. I'VE HAD AN OPPORTUNITY OVER THE LAST YEAR TO GET TO KNOW OUR NEW ROADS DIRECTOR, DIRECTOR OF ROADS KYLE SCHNEWEIS. DIRECTOR SCHNEWEIS HAS BEEN A FANTASTIC PARTNER IN PUTTING TOGETHER THIS LEGISLATION, AS WELL, AND I THINK WE HAVE GREAT THINGS AHEAD FOR OUR STATE. AGAIN, REMEMBER THAT THIS ALLOWS US TO FULFILL OUR COMMITMENTS TO COMPLETION OF EXPRESSWAYS IN NEBRASKA. IT MODERNIZES PROJECT DELIVERY METHODS. IT HELPS REPAIR OUR DEFICIENT BRIDGES, AND IT HELPS WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALONG EXPRESSWAY AND INFRASTRUCTURE CORRIDORS. SO WITH THAT, COLLEAGUES, I ASK FOR YOUR GREEN VOTE AND I DO APPRECIATE THE CONVERSATION TODAY. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH. THE QUESTION IS THE ADVANCEMENT OF LB960 TO E&R INITIAL. ALL THOSE IN FAVOR VOTE AYE; ALL THOSE OPPOSED VOTE NAY. HAVE ALL THOSE VOTED THAT WISH TO? RECORD, MR. CLERK. [LB960]

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CLERK: 43 AYES, 0 NAYS ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF LB960. [LB960]

SENATOR SCHEER: LB960 ADVANCES. MR. CLERK, MOVING TO LB960A. [LB960
LB960A]

CLERK: LB960A IS A BILL BY SENATOR SMITH. (READ TITLE.) [LB960A]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR SMITH, YOU'RE WELCOME TO OPEN ON LB960A.
[LB960A]

SENATOR SMITH: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. COLLEAGUES, THIS IS A SIMPLE
TECHNICAL BILL TO ALLOW FOR THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS INTO THE BANK AND
THE WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDS FROM THAT INFRASTRUCTURE BANK. PLEASE
VOTE GREEN ON THIS A BILL. THANK YOU. [LB960A]

SENATOR SCHEER: SENATOR CHAMBERS, YOU'RE RECOGNIZED. [LB960A]

SENATOR CHAMBERS: THANK YOU. MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE
LEGISLATURE, BASED ON WHAT THE SPEAKER TOLD US, WE'RE ABOUT TO
ADJOURN. I LISTENED TO A NUMBER OF MY COLLEAGUES GIVE THANKS TO
EVERYBODY. I THOUGHT I WAS AT THE OSCARS, BUT ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES
TOLD ME THAT, IF IT WERE THE OSCARS, I WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INVITED
(LAUGHTER). HE WAS RIGHT. BUT HERE IS WHAT I WAS THINKING,
SINCE... THANKS FOR BEING LAVISH. I OUGHT TO BE GIVEN THANKS FOR HAVING
ALLOWED THE BODY TO MOVE AT ITS OWN PACE WITHOUT GETTING IN THE WAY.
BUT BEING THE MODEST MAN THAT I AM--I'M TOO MODEST TO INDICATE HOW
MODEST I AM--YOU NEED NOT GIVE ME ANY THANKS, BUT IF YOU JUST CHOOSE
TO, WELL, YOU KNOW, I'LL BE GRACIOUS AND ACCEPT THEM. THANK YOU.
[LB960A]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR CHAMBERS. SENATOR SMITH, YOU'RE
WELCOME TO CLOSE ON LB960A. [LB960A]

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SENATOR SMITH: THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. AND JUST SO HE DOESN'T FEEL LEFT OUT, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY GRATITUDE AND THANKS TO SENATOR CHAMBERS FOR BEING BRIEF (LAUGHTER). AND THAT CONCLUDES MY COMMENTS. THANK YOU, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960A]

SENATOR SCHEER: THANK YOU, SENATOR SMITH. THE QUESTION IS ADVANCEMENT OF LB960A TO E&R INITIAL. ALL THOSE IN FAVOR VOTE AYE; ALL THOSE OPPOSED VOTE NAY. HAVE ALL VOTED THAT WISH TO? RECORD, MR. CLERK. [LB960A]

CLERK: 44 AYES, 0 NAYS ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF LB960A, MR. PRESIDENT. [LB960A]

SENATOR SCHEER: LB960A ADVANCES. MR. CLERK, ARE THERE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS? [LB960A]

CLERK: I DO, MR. PRESIDENT. SENATOR COASH WOULD LIKE TO PRINT AN AMENDMENT TO LB934. NEW A BILLS: (READ LB901A AND LB908A BY TITLE FOR THE FIRST TIME.) SENATOR FOX WOULD LIKE TO ADD HER NAME TO LB990. (LEGISLATIVE JOURNAL PAGES 989-994.) [LB934 LB901A LB908A LB990]

AND, MR. PRESIDENT, SENATOR DAVIS WOULD MOVE TO ADJOURN THE BODY UNTIL WEDNESDAY MORNING, MARCH 16, AT 9:00 A.M.

SENATOR SCHEER: YOU'VE HEARD THE MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT. ALL THOSE IN FAVOR SAY AYE. ALL THOSE OPPOSED SAY NAY. AYES HAVE IT. WE ARE ADJOURNED.