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March 10, 2004 LB 869

SENATOR PREISTER: Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Preister. Anybody else wishing to speak to the advancement of LB 869? Seeing no lights on, Senator Kremer, you may close on advancement of LB 869, if you care to.

SENATOR KREMER: Thank you, Cudaback and members of the body. Senator Beutler, I appreciate your remarks and I think you were right on, and I think it was the intent of the committee all the time that we did not invade the sanctity and the independence of the trust fund. And Mary Harding did also testify that it's not unprecedented for the task...or for the trust to work with the partners in assisting the trust in administrating grant funds. And also, when it was originally drafted, was thinking that the federal funds would have to have some seed money and some matching funds, and thinking that was the place to go, which I think they did also agree with, but feeling that it should not be required. Then they would just be in line with the grants, like was mentioned before. Again, the purpose of the law is to provide a more stable and consistent dedicated cash fund base that is less vulnerable to state budget cycles. And as we've stated in some of our other programs, we've had to go back to many fees because of the shortage in our General Fund, and we've had...taken money away from many programs. It's to complement existing noxious weed control efforts with authorities and resources that are geared toward proactive and preventative activities on invasive weeds. It's much cheaper to do it that way than to wait until a noxious weed has taken over a large area. And also, it's to coordinate the state program with the federal incentives...invasive species initiatives, and include potential legislation that would authorize federal pass-through grants funds to stimulate the local response strategies. So these were some of the...some of the goals. And I guess, again on the funding, I'd like to just say...state what in the past how the noxious weed program has been funded. And up until that we had introduced this bill, the pesticide registrations were about 63 percent of the funds, the General Funds were about 24 percent, and the Cash Reserve drawdown was about 12 percent. With the funds that we are transferring in from the weed book,