

a problem. One of the problems is a lack of local funds. So I believe that this amendment is a good one. It conforms the system so that they are the same where they use the same contribution from local government whether you are talking about state projects or federal projects and so I would move for the adoption of these amendments.

SENATOR MARSH: Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Yes, Mr. President, members of the Legislature, as you may recall when LB 42 was discussed the other day I introduced an amendment which is in the Journal which would have raised the railroad portion of the responsibility for paying for improvements on railroad crossings and decrease the community percentage that they had to pay on those and then kept the state level at the same level as it is now. Since then as Senator Cullan has said, we have found out some information to me which is shocking, absolutely shocking, about the amount of money the state is sitting on, basically, that could be used for improving of railroad crossing safety in this state. The problem as Senator Cullan has identified it is not with the state or the federal monies that are available. We have an unbelievable amount. It is truly a shocking amount of money that we have in the State of Nebraska which could be used for these projects. The problem is as Senator Cullan has identified is with the local communities who cannot match the money needed at the present level which is ten percent of the total cost. Senator Cullan's amendment would reduce to two and half percent for any project in the state dealing with railroad crossing safety, down to two and a half percent. That would be a very positive step in dealing with what is the major problem. The railroads would be left at ten percent of the cost. Now I wanted to raise that to fifteen percent because I thought that the cause of a problem ought to be the primary solution to a problem and that is that the railroads ought to spend the money to take care of a problem that they create. But it looks to me as though that putting this responsibility on the railroads would not, in fact, be in the general interest and the best interest of the State of Nebraska because some of the rails have the money from the coal slurry, coal transportation projects that they have but some of the rails don't. So what you'd have is where several railroads could meet that matching level and some of them could not and so we would be back to base one. We would not accomplish anything, and instead of being an improvement, we would actually be a detriment to trying to deal with this very serious problem of railroad crossing safety.