

April 9, 1980

LB 722

SENATOR NICHOL: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature, I would like to have had a copy of this amendment in front of us but we don't have one, for which I am sorry, and I think it would help us a lot if we did have it. Now, Senator Warner, I would like to ask a couple of questions. We are changing this from 23 1/3, 23 1/3, and 53 1/3 which I think adds up to 100% to a fourth, a fourth and fifty percent, is that correct?

SENATOR WARNER: No.

SENATOR NICHOL: Okay, explain that one more time.

SENATOR WARNER: We are not touching the existing ten and a half cents distribution. That statute stands alone as it has since 1969 in the allocation. All we are doing in this amendment is increasing one cent per gallon, and that money would be equally distributed to the counties and cities. That is it. Now 722 has the excise tax in the body that goes strictly to the Highway Department.

SENATOR NICHOL: Okay. Why don't we make the entire amount collected under 722 commensurate with the way it is divided now with the amount that we do collect now?

SENATOR WARNER: For the reason, Senator Nichol, as I think I have tried to explain, 722, the level of taxation is determined by the level of appropriation this body and the Governor approves to reflect the construction requirement of the one year state highway program and there is no way that you can use the budgets that are submitted by each local entity, governmental subdivision, in the same fashion, unless you want to set every local entity's road budget which obviously would be undesirable and inappropriate.

SENATOR NICHOL: But with us collecting almost three percent instead of two percent or four percent, whichever, the counties are getting the short end of the stick. Now if you are going to collect two percent, that is one thing, but when we are collecting 2.8, that is another. With the distribution as you have complicated it, I think the counties are getting the short end of the stick, and the reason I say this is they have long been hard up. Now the state has other means of getting money for roads that the counties don't have and, frankly, nobody I think was listening when Senator Hefner was talking about the sad state of roads and bridges in counties for which they do not have money to repair and I am real...very cautious about going along with something like this when the counties I feel are not getting their