

to look very closely at the general fund expenditures. I've been compelled to do that because we have had revenue shortfalls much of the time and as a result of looking at general fund expenditures, not just me, but all of us, we have in effect held our general fund increases over the last five years to about 24 percent. But one portion of our budget is not a general fund side at all. It is a cash fund side. Now when I first came down here I said I had the notion that maybe cash funds had to deal with monies paid out of people's pockets in the way of fees that weren't taxes, but I discovered over time that cash funds are simply earmarked taxes as well as fees and other items. And earmarked taxes such as the gas tax don't come under the general fund budget, but instead come under the cash fund budget. And what I discovered is that the growth in the cash funds side that you and I don't scrutinize has been about 35 percent in five years. And so I said I felt that it was time, it was time at least for me to offer on the floor of the Legislature an amendment which would cause us to take a look at the cash funds side of the budget and what I am doing is I am saying that that portion of the highway patrol which monitors our roads, which monitors our highways will be funded just like that portion of our Department of Roads that scrapes the roads, that cleans the roads, that plants the shoulders of the roads. It will be funded out of the cash funds side of the budget, out of user fees. And what I said is that when that's done the effect will be to lower the general fund by about \$8.9 million. It will lower the general fund by about \$8.9 million and, of course, it will increase by the same token the cash fund obligation by \$8.9 million. That increase in the cash fund obligation by \$8.9 million means that there will have to be either an offset to highway construction by \$8.9 million, or in the alternative, an increase to the variable gas tax so that the same level of construction can be maintained. But I said to myself, in the end I don't care what the ultimate outcome is whether it's a decrease in the level of construction by \$8.9 million or an increase in the variable gas tax. What I really am concerned about is that we have spent so many years and so much time squeezing, nickel and diming those state operations that are funded from the general fund side of our budget without even beginning to do the same with those state operations funded out of the cash fund side of our budget, that the time has come in my point of view for the cash fund side to begin to share, to begin to share in the kind of scrutiny, the kind of accounting, the kind of