

some means to force local county weed control authorities, whether it be a county weed board or the county commissioners, themselves, who have the control, I believe, under the statutes of the weed superintendent to enforce the law. So the amendment that was the committee amendment originally introduced by the Agriculture Committee said that, okay, if the...that we will give enough authority to the Director of the Department of Agriculture to determine whether or not the weeds were actually being controlled. They may examine to see whether it is happening. Now, if it is not happening, then under the procedure, and you should have a handout describing it on your desk, under the procedure the Department of Agriculture would determine following hearings, and that is the reason for the new amendment, because the Attorney General indicated that you cannot follow the procedure we originally outlined, that of withholding highway funds without giving a formal hearing process to the parties involved. That is the major difference in the new amendment and it is on Section 7. I believe it is toward the back of the amendment that spells out the hearing process. Once the hearing process is completed, if, in fact, the county weed control authority is not controlling the noxious weeds in their county, then the Department of Agriculture notifies the Attorney General and notifies the State Treasurer to withhold the Highway Trust Funds to that county until the county weed control authority does, in fact, take care of the noxious weeds. That is the hammer. Now, there won't require a lot of funds on the state level because all it will require is the amount to determine whether or not it is actually happening to start with. But the fear of the state of having to go in and actually do it, actually pay for the costs of the cleanup, is not there any longer. Now, I want to point out to you because it mentions in the handout that the duty on the landowner is not affected in any way, shape or form by this bill or this amendment. The duty on the landowner to clean up their weeds and the ability of the weed control authority to impose fines on landowners is not affected by this bill or this amendment. I want to emphasize that. This has only to do with the connection between the state and the local county board or county weed control authority. That is the amendment, Mr. President. I urge its adoption as an amendment to the committee amendments and would be happy to answer any questions that others might have.

SENATOR HANNIBAL: Thank you, Senator Vickers. We have some