

dollars received from the federal government over a seven-year period. We have got way more than that in just one year of state revenue. So isn't his plea much better for a crumb from General Funds that happens every year, and we are allowed, that's the reason we have an appropriations process, that is the reason I put my faith and trust in the people from my area on the Appropriations Committee, and the other areas, that they set the state's priorities in spending because they can give out that crumb here or that crumb there, if you want to use that term. That is called setting priorities and what starts, I guess, and generates me to stand up and talk, and I am going to do it on a couple of occasions, is to start to talk about you are violating the process, and that process is stable funding for roads. Every one of you get a direct, essential benefit from the Department of Roads. Let me just take the Omaha project that is up there right now. As I was reading in the paper, some of the South Omaha merchants were complaining about the Omaha road projects not getting done enough. Two hundred and eighty-eight million dollars is budgeted for that project over a period of years. It is a ten year project. We are about four years through that project. Now so far we have spent about 122 million, about 166 million left to spend up there. That money has got to come in on a consistent flow. It can't vary because people buy less gas, so we build less roads. Inflation occurs, the price of crude oil goes up, and you have all these variables. So we have dealt with those over the years. We have struggled with that over the years, then in 1980 we placed into some measure the variable gas tax rate to take care of that inflation rising, the variations in consumption. But, for example, if we have anywhere from a three to five million dollar loss in a year, that can put us back as much as six months to a year in construction projects. Last year alone, as to how unstable it can be at times, because the feds didn't pass a federal highway bill by October 1st, that put us six months behind in road construction projects because of the loss of the stable flow of money. We had to back off of some of those projects. If you put bad weather into that, and so what does that do? What does that really do to the road systems in the State of Nebraska? Well, you may well extend out that project in Omaha beyond the ten years. In fact, it is easily conceived you could go 11 or 12 years. It is dangerous. You have got lives at stake because of the construction, but those projects will probably go on, and so they are going to have to take that money from somewhere else.