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SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. I will announce that we are going to pass over the item under Item 8 on the committee priority bill. We will go to Item 9 and General File, Speaker priority bills and LB 237.

CLERK: Mr. President, 237, a bill introduced by Senator Bromm and a number of members. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 11, referred to the Natural Resources Committee, advanced to General File. I have committee amendments pending, Mr. President.

SPEAKER BAACK: Senator Beutler, on the committee amendments.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, the committee amendments are very simple. They really only deal with one matter and I think noncontroversial, but not unimportant. This bill has to do with the Petroleum Release Remedial Action Cash Fund which you all will recall is gas tax money that is put into a particular fund in order to help primarily gas state folks do the cleanup work that is now being required to be done as a move to replace tanks and come into compliance with emerging and ever-changing and ever more stringent federal requirements. And as part of that whole system a certain part of the remedial action that is necessary, the cost of remedial action is paid by the owner and they either have to pay that directly or get insurance to cover the portion that is their portion and the remaining portion then is funded by everybody who pays the gas tax through payments out of this remedial fund. And Senator Bromm came in with a bill that suggested that instead of curtailing payments out of the fund with respect to third party claimants that, in fact, we limit, we extend the sunset date on that portion of the bill and allow third party claims to be paid up through the end of December 1998 and then there were a couple of other provisions in his bill. And the committee said, fine, but in exchange let's state a clear philosophy that as of that particular date, December 31, 1998, we are going to make an effort to get out of the public funding of those kinds of cleanups because at that point in time everybody will be required to have new tanks, insurance will be available and affordable and so all that the committee amendment does then is to state that as of December 31, 1998 payments, the types of claims that can be dealt with, they will not be able to deal with reimbursement for any claim reported after that date.