

amount now is 66 plus million, when it was not maybe 10 years ago it was 39. You know, maybe we have to earmark the money to discipline the Legislature, to discipline itself, to provide funds, because there isn't much glory in providing money to maintain buildings. And it's a serious question, it's a serious issue. And I would hope the Appropriations Committee would do better than they did sometimes while I was there and hold that funding in deferred maintenance at a level that is necessary in order to keep that 66 million from becoming 90 million in another couple of years. So it's a very legitimate point, one that I certainly understand and am supporting. But under the circumstances, I appreciate the withdrawal of the amendment so that that kind of flexibility, of putting the money in the General Fund, is there. But the withdrawal of the amendment does not withdraw the issue that is before the state and has been for some time, and there was an excellent vehicle enacted in 309. And if there's any fault with it, the fault lies with the Governors and legislators not providing a level of appropriation that ought to have been done to take care of it. But that's another issue, but it's one that needs to be concerned because it's a real issue, and it's another one of these kinds of things that can happen in government by deferral of necessary expenditures that you wake up with a major problem sometimes. With that,...

SPEAKER BAACK: One minute.

SENATOR WARNER: ...Mr. President, I would just urge that the bill be advanced.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Warner. Senator Cudaback. Senator Will.

SENATOR WILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the body. I rise in...in support of LB 22 at this point. I want to visit a little bit about the nature of the cigarette tax. I, frankly, am not a big fan of the cigarette tax as a general revenue raiser, primarily because it simply tends to be a regressive tax. When you put an excise tax on cigarettes it tends to hit proportionately people with lower incomes to a greater extent than it does people with higher incomes. If you look at most studies involving the consumption of tobacco products, it tends to be people in the lower socioeconomic brackets that consume these products. So by virtue of that fact whenever you put a tax on the product, when you increase the tax on the products it