

this. My amendment goes the other direction, it says, no, the director can, in fact, pick which applications and submit it, and they will be approved automatically, unless by majority vote the council does, in fact, disapprove one of the applicants. And I understand Senator Beutler's concern on philosophy, on do we want commissions to do this. And I would be delighted if the Natural Resources Committee would look into what commissions do or don't do, but in my sense, in this particular case the council needs to have some check. And to close on this, and I know the bill needs to pass by eight-thirty, so I hope the discussion will be brief on it and we can get to a vote. But my sense is in the case where you have hundreds of thousands of dollars, and in many cases millions of dollars at stake, to put all of that in one person, in a director that's not accountable necessarily to anyone else on a check, is not very good policy. There needs to be some check there, and this one would simply say, if the council wants to override one of those decisions they can do so by majority vote, instead of the way it is now where they have to be unanimous. This does not put them into the decision-making process, unless they want to. It still keeps most of the authority with the director, and I would urge the adoption of the amendment.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Bernard-Stevens. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Madam President, members of the Legislature, I do not think this would be good policy to handle this in this manner. We had this debate on General File, and now we're having this debate again, which is fine. But I hope you will keep in mind that the suggestion that was made by the Natural Resources Committee, that is that the director handle the grants, is basically in accordance with what we do in the Department of Economic Development where the director makes the decisions about the grants. It's what we do in most other areas of even the Department of Environmental Quality, in other grant programs that they have. What's being suggested to you, or what was suggested to you by the committee was in accordance with what has been generally understood to be good policy in terms of how these things are handled. The director is not a king unto himself. The director works through a staff, staff recommendations are made to the director. The director is accountable to the Governor, and the Governor is accountable to the people. So there is a political system there that is a check on what's going on. Keep in mind that this advisory group