

April 7, 1982

LB 799

Senators Newell and Vickers. It is on page 1754.

SENATOR NICHOL: Senator Newell.

SENATOR NEWELL: Mr. President and members of the body, I have had some concerns about various incentives that have been provided to encourage this industry or that industry or whatever industry and I have listened to the arguments that Senator Decamp and Senator Wesely have made in regards to what a great thing it would be if we had these solar credits. Frankly, what we have now on the book is supposed to be a great incentive when they first came across the board and those incentives were, first, the property tax. You remember we had a bill in this Legislature which granted exemption from property tax for solar improvements. I argued at that time that I doubted very much that those property tax exemptions would be any great incentive. And you know what, the industry comes in and they say they have not been any great incentive. So I say, let's take them away. Sponsors of the bill say, well, okay, they are no great incentive, we have to have these credits. And I say, that may be the case but let's take away the property tax exemption. We also provided a sales tax exemption. You remember, I don't know if you remember but we said on the floor of the Legislature that with this sales tax exemption we are going to create a tremendous incentive to use alternative energy sources. Well, we passed that legislation and it wasn't all that much of an incentive. The introducers of the bill came in and they say, you know, we need another incentive, credits will work, not these other things. Well, I have had doubts about all the various gimmicks that will work. But I did talk to Senator De Camp. I did talk to Senator Wesely and I said, you know, I can appreciate your arguments that a phasing out of credits will give the industry a chance to move. I can appreciate those points. But, you know, we don't need the credits if we keep the other incentives that we provided on the books and they basically agreed with me that we could take those other incentives off the books because they weren't incentives. Now, frankly, I can support this bill, 799, if these exemptions come out because exemptions are never reviewed, they are never analyzed, they are never looked at, they are never thought about after they granted. They are just there. And the public doesn't know about them unless somebody tells them. So I think exemptions are the wrong, absolutely the wrong way to go, and if we are going to provide incentives we need to take these exemptions out, the sales tax exemption, the property tax exemption and go with the credits only. I would hope that Senator DeCamp and Senator Wesely would see the merits of that and support this proposal.