

these communities are not going to have enough money to do infrastructure but I think this bill points to an extremely important issue that Senator Landis addressed in his opening, and that is, most people don't get very excited about doing infrastructure but, frankly, ladies and gentlemen, if we don't address infrastructure in this state beyond the highways, which are extremely important, I think a good share of this state is going to flat dry up and blow away. So I think we probably ought to at least take a look at this issue in that context, and maybe this is the bill that really causes us to start focusing very seriously on that, and to figure out what the right solutions are to do that. There is very definitely a perceived difference of interest where I come from, and I suspect throughout most of this state, between what state government wants and what local communities want. In fact, I think that perceived difference of interest has been generated largely by the kinds of tax policies that we have adopted over the last few years, that somehow it is okay to pass a tax policy that benefits primarily metropolitan areas, but now it is probably not okay even to throw a few cents out to the rural communities, and, once again, it will be a few cents because I would reiterate once again, Lincoln and Omaha will get the lion's share of this. And I would like to suggest on this bill that it is time for us, as responsible representatives of everybody in this state, to quit putting ourselves in a competitive position with local governments. It is time for state and local governments to sit down together and figure out how we are going to cooperate, how to address a diversity of needs across this state, and, frankly, the needs in the rural areas are considerably different than the needs in the urban areas, and the folks that I represent feel very much left out of this ball game. So I think in this era of basically go it alone federalism, which hasn't changed even though the President has changed, it looks to me like the continued message we will get from Washington is, good luck, local governments, we took away your revenue sharing; good luck, state governments, we are going to continue to mandate a whole range of programs which we are going to see impact on our budget this year, but we are not going to give you any money. And so I would suggest that rather than all of us jealously sitting on the state tax base and saying somehow we have got to keep that money away from those nasty local governments, and I am not wild about the distribution formula in this bill, I am not wild about some of the provisions, but, nevertheless, if this is the bill it takes for us to move in that direction, then maybe this is the bill we