

take that route. I recall back when I first came in 13 years ago that the question at that time wasn't protection of the river as a scenic river, it was damming the river with the Norden Dam. And I recall being involved on the Public Works Committee as we had a resolution to endorse the Norden Dam and that was defeated and finally the federal government stopped that project and we've now gone a different route to not wanting to dam the river but, in fact, trying to protect the river, a very different discussion today than we had 12 years ago. I like the focus. It's a much better focus. It's nice to be able to discuss with Senator Lamb the question of how to protect that river rather than how to change it dramatically by having a dam back up the water. And so I feel that, obviously, it's good to hear the discussion about trying to protect the scenic quality of the river and other rivers in the state but I again come back to, I think, the motivation here is somewhat in question and that if, truly, there is sincerity in trying to address the issue, the questions that have been raised are legitimate about this particular bill, that the approach of having local counties handle it and the disparity between the counties is a significant one and that there are better avenues in which the state could truly move forward to protect our scenic rivers, but to do that at this point would require the cooperation and communication between a number of different interests. So the better course of action would be to take the bill back, review it and work over the course of next year and come back next year. But let me tell you that if we do defeat this legislation, if it is not pulled out of committee after having been killed, and if the federal legislation passes, I will bet anybody on the floor that you're not going to see this legislation reintroduced, that it's motivation is pretty clear and that I doubt you will see any real initiative to try and address this issue of scenic rivers. That's unfortunate because, truly, it does raise a legitimate point that the state could play an important role, that we could work with local governments, that we could deal with this problem together and not just to focus in on the Niobrara River and not just focus in on blocking federal legislation. And so there is some good and some virtue here in this legislation. But the way to achieve that virtue is to kill the bill, allow it to be killed and then to move forward on this issue through interim study and come back next year with a better piece of legislation than is proposed in LB 511. So, again, I rise in opposition to bringing this bill back to life.