

February 29, 1996 LB 1322

that we have urban interests, that we have all across-the-spectrum interests represented on this task force. And I think Senator Withem's amendment coming up, and maybe Senator Chambers' will lead us to the formation of a better task force. I think the most important thing that I could say to you in response to Senator Maurstad's argument about this should be done at the community level, is that I agree. I agree 100 percent, and I think this is going to allow more community involvement. Remember, I mentioned yesterday, just before we adjourned for lunch, that the League of Municipalities came in in strong support of this bill. The city administration of Cozad came in in strong support. The Association of Community Action Agencies, which deal with low-income housing, came in in strong support of this. In addition, we received letters from other communities across the state. I think the communities feel that this is a way for them to be involved and a way for them to impact. I don't want to go into the funding issue right now because that's another question, but please don't tie your questions about the funding to the question of whether or not to adopt this amendment. It is a separate issue, should be considered separately. If you don't like...if you are having difficulties with questions about the funding issue, wait till we get there. But consider the Maurstad amendment separately. The task force is very important and so is the housing commission because they will both allow us to focus on one, the cost of low-income housing, and two, how can we generate the funds to get them into building some more low-income housing. The Department of Economic Development, again I have to stress, told us that by the year 2000, we will be short 39,000 housing units in this state. It's hard to believe because our population doesn't...

SENATOR COORDSEN: One minute.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: ...seem to be growing that fast, about 39,000 units of which 10,000 of them, a fourth of them, more than a fourth of them, will be low-income housing needs. I think it's critical that we address this issue. If we don't do this, then we just fall back behind. Last year's study group was the first step. This is the second step. Next will be to find the funding and to get the communities going on some of these units. So thank you very much. Please vote against the Maurstad amendment.