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a lot to learn about this issue. And I'm concerned that a commission could recommend changes. They said they would like to have a hearing before they get started. I would hope there would be a lot more than just one hearing, and I'm concerned. Enabling legislation, as it comes up, we'll have to take a look at it. But for those people that are out there saying, well, I'm glad somebody is going to try to do something about holding down the cost of government, be careful. It hasn't worked in the past, unless we only view it from the position and point of view of services.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Lynch. (Visitors introduced.) There are no further lights on, Senator Schimek. You're recognized to close, if you wish.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you. I do, Mr. President and members. I guess I would like to just...first of all, Senator Lynch, I think you said some things that need to be said on this issue, and I'm listening and I know exactly where you're coming from. But I want to take you back to the fact that in 1998 the voters of this state did pass a constitutional amendment which provided for mergers. So the Government and the Revenue Committees felt a need to put together some enabling language. And I don't know that we're at the perfect spot yet. We brought this bill out onto the floor very late, it's certainly nothing that I think that we should take up this year. I'm sure that more work needs to be done on this. But what we've tried to do is we've tried to craft something where those local entities are the ones who actually make a lot of the decisions about how they merge. And I think that's where the decision-making process needs to be. We need to make sure that the counties don't get tromped on, we need to make sure that the little towns and counties don't get tromped on, we need to make certain that the people have the final say in all of this, and that it's a fair election so that one large entity can't swallow another smaller entity. And I hear your concerns and I think they are very, very valid, so we have to be very careful how we put this language together. The reason I think that we're taking your time right now to have this discussion is because you're probably going to get some questions and comments from your cities and counties, the ones at least that are interested in some kind of a merger. And I'm...I don't think there's going to be that many, I think, you