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we are ending up with one of the highest assessments in the country for this purpose. But the other concern that I have is that it is tending to pick on the hotel/motel industry. In some ways, I think we ought to consider broadening it to the food industry and some others that gain a lot of benefit from the tourism industries coming in. I have been a supporter of the tourism industry. It brings in lots of outside dollars from outside the state, which I think is very critical, especially in these times, but it seems like we end up picking on the lodging industry most of all, and that's what my motel operators are concerned about, that there's no corresponding increase on other industries that benefit probably even more. Obviously, I'm a Lewis and Clark supporter and I think we're going to see a huge influx of people from across the world, but perhaps we ought to take a larger perspective on what we're going to try to do to receive the benefits of that travel and not just on the tourism industry. Now, I'm not prepared today to offer anything as an alternative or an increase, but at this point I am reluctant to put this additional burden only on the lodging industry. And I appreciate the fact that our larger cities apparently want to do it. I'm not so sure whether it's that way across the state. So I, too, am reluctant at this point to expand this accessibility to other counties across the state unless I hear a broader, grass-roots support for it. Thank you.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Wehrbein. Senator Beutler.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature, I would like to speak in strong support of this particular bill. The tourism industry in Nebraska is, if you look at it compared to tourism industries across the country, is not one of the well-developed ones, and part of the reason that it's not one of the better developed ones is because we don't invest in it as much as many other states do. It's simply, at least from the figures I have, and I'm passing them out to you and you can look at them and see what you think, but it's simply not true that our lodging tax and overall tax structure is higher than other places. In fact, it's generally lower, and considerably lower when you get outside of Omaha, than in other areas of the country. And what's happening is that those other areas of the country are taking these tax revenues and developing their