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FLOOR DEBATE

March 13, 2003      LB 726

citizens in our town, their family, their friends; used by people coming to visit the local college to visit their kids; come to events; and it's used by business associates coming to visit businesses in Blair. We don't have people driving to Blair to spend a day or two and go through our tourism. You can do it in a day. What I'm suggesting is that one size doesn't fit all. I'm suggesting that this is not an option that most counties would turn down. It's an easy thing to apply. And I just don't think it's good for the citizens and the businesses in my community. And I have to feel there are similar counties throughout the state. So with that, with all due respect to Senator Loudon, I rise in opposition to the bill, and yield the rest of my time to the Chair.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Thank you, Senator Mines. There are several senators wishing to speak. Senator Schimek, followed by Senators Beutler, Stuthman, Stuhr, Smith, McDonald, Friend, and Loudon. We're discussing LB 726. Senator Schimek.

SENATOR SCHIMEK: Thank you, Mr. President and members. I rise in strong support of LB 726. And I would argue that one size does not fit all, and that is why we exempted, if you will, counties over 300,000 from the state policy and gave Douglas County the ability to impose this additional 2 percent lodging tax. All we're asking for in this bill is to give every other county that same option if they want to choose it. And it is a local option. Senator Mines, I would guess that this would be a very heavily discussed topic in your county. Because of the college there, your county might think that this was something that they really shouldn't do. But I would also suggest to you that you can't really count the sales tax figures that you talked about in the same breath as the hotel taxes, because there's different people paying those. The sales taxes are what your local residents pay, and this hotel/motel tax is, for the most part, something that people from outside of your county pay. And so I don't think they should all be lumped together in one lump sum. Now, maybe you can tell me why they should be, and maybe I'm wrong, but I'm trying to think through what you just said. I think that we need to give other counties the same option. I don't know what Lancaster County would do. I'm sure that there would be some in the hotel/motel association in