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FLOOR DEBATE

January 31, 2005    LB 261

SENATOR CUDABACK:    Thank you, Senator Hudkins.    Further discussion on advancement of LB 261?    Senator Louden, followed by Senator Stuhr.

SENATOR LOUDEN:    Thank you, Mr. President and members of the body. I myself rise in opposition to this bill. I've talked to our county assessors and the people out in our area. We have 11 counties out there in the western end of the state that belong to this land valuation board. And they're still meeting, and they're still using this board. True, when the TERC committee was built, why, it more or less was supposed to take over the job that the land valuation board did by equalizing valuations between counties. And of course, to me, the jury is still out on the TERC committee, whether they're doing the job like it was intended to or not. So this land valuation boards out there, they don't cost the state any money. People volunteer to go to those things. I don't think they always get the mileage paid. I have attended some of them, and I said probably the biggest thing on the agenda at the end of the day was who was going to pay for the lunch, because everybody had to go dutch, and that sort of thing. But they do meet. And whenever you have county officials meeting, that isn't all bad. They meet, they coordinate some of the valuations and the classifications between counties. It gives them a chance to get together and work on some of the problems on the area. They don't always discuss land valuations of horticultural and agricultural lands. A lot of times, there's other issues that are brought up on taxation and various issues, depending on whether...on who attends those meetings, whether it's mostly county commissioners, or whether it be assessors, or whoever. This is something that's working out there in areas. If the people are using it and making it work, I don't see where we as legislators should take it off of the books just because we have the ability to do so. This is something that is done on a local level, and any time we can encourage work be done and legislation and problems to be solved at the local level, I think we should. They've been in place for several years so it is something that can be used in the local area. They probably...if they were disbanded, I don't know if they would ever need something like that again, but it's a lot harder to organize them once they've