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FLOOR DEBATE

March 27, 2006 LB 407, 808

through the transcript of the Revenue Committee hearing on LB 407, Senator Raikes' original bill to remove recapture, it appears that the only reasons given for removing the language were, one, recapture doesn't seem to collect that much revenue, and two, it's a bother to keep the double set of figures required to determine the correct amounts. Well, at least in Sarpy County, an average of \$780,000 per year between 2002 and 2004 seems like a substantial amount to me, and certainly to Sarpy County. Greenbelting is in and of itself a recognition of the pressure in some counties to convert to a higher use, either residential or commercial. The purpose of greenbelting was and is to try to keep land in agriculture use as long as possible, and to prevent land speculation. Senator Jerome Warner introduced the bill that created special valuation or greenbelting. He said that the individual after individual had found that, because of rising taxes, due to speculative values being attached to their properties, the taxes had reached a point that the income from the land resulted in no income to them. Senator Warner was worried about the pressure to sell agricultural land because of its potential for development. He said special valuation was, for all practical matter, a preferential tax treatment, and justified recapture by noting there is a point where this land use is changed. Local government, whether it is a municipality or a county, frequently incurs additional expense in that process. Senator Warner also said, when development takes place, then the community adjacent to the land usually incurs some additional expenses, whether it be roads, sewers, whatever, police force protection, and on and on. And at that time, the development may take place, and I think it's appropriate some additional money is collected at that time to help offset the cost of development to the community as a whole. Let's not forget where the bulk of the revenue from recapture goes--to the school districts. Our policy as a Legislature with the school aid formula is to strongly encourage school districts to maximize their resources. And what they don't have in resources, the state makes up in equalization. If we lose recapture, that is just more resources lost to the school district which we have to make up here. I ask your favorable consideration and adoption of AM2908. Thank you.