

the issue. The agricultural groups are all supporting the amendment today, or I mean the bill. All I'm trying to say is that they are making a mistake. What was actually promised repeatedly on this floor in Amendment 4 was, remember those words? You just used them. To maintain the status quo. Everybody heard it. This system is definitely not the status quo. It is the status quo for one year. What I am offering is the status quo on a permanent basis for the future. In other words, the same taxing system that was in effect. The only difference is that a system was in effect illegally prior to Amendment 4. Amendment 4 gave this Legislature the power and authority to maintain the status quo which was what was sought by agricultural groups and that's what my previous amendment did. However, as I say, it's clear to me that the bill in its new formula form is going to pass and Senator Lundy was right about one thing he brought out. Senator Lundy said, if you don't like it, you can come back next year and the next year and the next year and change the formula and that, my friends, is exactly what you're going to do. There will be no stability. There will be no predictability. There will be a system subject to pressures of whoever happens to have the power or the need for money at any particular time. What my amendment does now is simply extends the current system for one year and in that year between now and January I would hope they would either review this formula and change it or if they chose not to do that, to come up with another system or maintain the proposal I suggested earlier. I'll simply close by saying I have not unduly delayed this bill. The valuing of agricultural land which is a critical piece of our whole tax system is a pretty important piece of merchandise. This is the first substantive debate, really substantive, on the issue or on alternatives on the issue. And for somebody to say that by offering two amendments, one which simply extends the system for one year and one which maintains the current status quo system, that that's delaying is simply not being very honest with the issue. When you can spend two and three days on some of the less important matters, you sure as blazes can spend a couple hours on one of the most important ones. I'll finish simply by using the words of a good friend of mine, a former tax commissioner who refuses to let his name be used, but who I think knows more about the agricultural situation and agricultural valuation system than anybody since he took all the cases to the Supreme Court and consistently won them, but predicted all this was going to happen. He said,