

fact here in the Chamber. And if we just sold all of the lands, we wouldn't have to deal with that, how we deal with the rental, is one set of issues. Another set of issues involves the eastern versus western that, well, you guys in the eastern part of the state had all of your land sold back in the turn of the century days and the only ones existing are out in the western part of the state, so if we sell all of the lands, that will put everybody in the state on equal footing and we'll have one less divisive issue in the state. But as a set of issues, frankly, dealing with the management of the school lands and we've had hearing after hearing after hearing in which one side will charge ineptitude in managing the lands, that they're not kept up, that they don't get as a good a rentals as they should, and, frankly, there is a sense of arrogance among those who administer the school lands, a contempt of the Legislature for even considering this particular action. All of those things lead a person to think that, yeah, let's just get this issue out of our hair and by doing so let's sell the lands. That's the one set of the issues and that's probably what was dominating in my mind when we moved...when we voted to advance the bill. On the other side is the fact that for decades we have had this land set aside for the purpose of providing revenues to operate our schools. Historically, the lands, by having them...having them appreciate in value, along with the rentals going up, have provided far, far, far more revenues than the...than the money that has been invested from the sales. And you've all seen that information. Ex-Governor Thone and Tom Vickers have supplied all that information to you and it's indisputable. More money has been made available to the students of the state by keeping it in the land which has been appreciated in its value. The money that is in the permanent school fund from the sale does not appreciate in value because we distribute the interest from that every year. And I guess that final analysis of what is good for the decades of the future versus getting rid of a very thorny political problem here that we have in front of us makes me come down on the side of we should preserve the school lands, we should not sell them, we probably ought to be dealing with these other issues that are the thorny issues and solve those if we can, but the fact that they're out there should not lead us out of frustration to say, let's get rid of the school lands. So I would urge you to not vote for the advancement of the bill.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Withem. Senator Haberman.

SENATOR HABERMAN: Mr. President and members of the body, there