

April 11, 1994 LB 961

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Why...what is the rationale for exempting these, since the property is the same?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Because...

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Same type?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Because the agricultural and horticultural societies are in the nature of a political subdivision, albeit a specialized one. They are authorized to levy a tax. They do have special organizational statutes, and they are creatures, kind of a peculiar creature, albeit, of state government. I have found the definition of horticultural, if you are interested. It is a science or art of cultivating fruits, vegetables, flowers, and plants. So apparently that division of agricultural simply excludes livestock.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay. And agricultural would include everything,...

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: Well, I am assuming...

SENATOR CHAMBERS: ...livestock...

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: I am assuming so, Senator, yes.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay. Now, since the property is the same, it is obvious, though, this is not a political subdivision in the strict...it is not even a governmental subdivision?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: No, Senator, they have boards that, they form up by charter, and they have boards that are elected by membership. The boards typically are not elected at large.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: How would it harm these groups if they had to pay the same kind of personal property taxes that other organizations with similar property would have to pay?

SENATOR WICKERSHAM: I believe the distinction, Senator, is that these organizations are supported almost exclusively by taxation themselves. I believe I described the fact that they are able to levy, and if you paid taxes simply to pay taxes, that is rather circular. Collected taxes simply to pay taxes, that is circular.