

WILLMOTTS & WHY NOTS

DAVID J. WILLMOTT SR., EDITOR

A Vote At Last

Long Island ratepayers were never asked for permission to build a nuclear power plant in their midst. This was strictly a decision made by the management of the Long Island Lighting Company on behalf of its stockholders, for their own benefit.

The ratepayers were never asked to be part of LILCO's grandiose scheme to turn Long Island into a nuclear generating farm when they planned to build 11 such facilities.

Long Island ratepayers were never allowed to vote on the Cuomo deal. In fact, the former governor circumvented a vote by the legislature by only agreeing to guarantee rates for LILCO for three years.

The Long Island ratepayers were never allowed to vote on the creation of LIPA. They were promised they would be given the right to choose the directors through an open vote, but even this privilege was denied them by Cuomo and Pataki. LIPA was created by Long Islanders, but was stolen by Albany politicians.

The LIPA deal approved by Pataki, Bruno and Silver was done without a vote by Long Islanders. Yet, Long Islanders will be expected to pay, on average, \$23,000 over 30 to 40 years and effectively have a mortgage placed on their property that will require them to pay \$55 per month before they buy a nickel's worth of electricity. Three Suffolk County Legislators have had enough and believe that the public should have a vote in this matter. They intend to place on the ballot this November or November 1998, a charter amendment asking for the Suffolk County

ratepayers' permission for the county to oppose the deal and if the deal is enacted, be mandated to hold LIPA's feet to the fire, making sure they live up to their promises. All legislators should support this measure.

This will be the first and probably only opportunity ratepayers and citizens will have to express their opinion on the deal. At last, they will have a say.

County Executive Gaffney can ensure that this issue is on the ballot this November by signing a "certificate of necessity," bringing the measure to a legislative vote on August 24. Gaffney must then immediately sign the legislation so that it will appear on November's ballot.

We would think Gaffney, who just two years ago pledged to kill LILCO, would be willing to give the public the right to express their opinion. His failure to do so will be tantamount to treason, because he will have betrayed the people who elected him. Gaffney's failure to act expediently will not kill the vote, it will only postpone it until 1998, when the governor will run, as well as all the assembly and senate members. If the vote is held in 1998, it could change the political landscape in Suffolk County for ever; something the politicians should think about.

It's up to Gaffney to not only issue the "certificate of necessity" and sign the legislation, but it is incumbent upon him to get out and campaign for a large turnout.

This is the most important issue facing Long Island and we cannot let apathy win.

And why not?

Make Affordable Housing Legal

After World War II and through the seventies, people migrated to Long Island, bought homes and raised their families. They planned on their homes being their place of retirement. Real estate taxes started to accelerate in the seventies and have been going up in leaps and bounds ever since.

Many couples found that the only way they could continue to live in their home was to convert a part of the house that was no longer needed into a separate "accessory" apartment. They used the income from that apartment to meet their tax bill and to develop equity so that they could continue to live in their home.

Most of these apartments were created illegally. It has been estimated that up to one-third of the single-family homes in most of Suffolk's western towns fall into this category.

For the past six months, Babylon Town has had an aggressive amnesty program that has allowed residents who illegally converted their houses to come forth and make them legal. Other towns are considering such proposals.

The town has laid down guidelines for these apartments. Those requirements stipulate that they must meet state building and fire codes, require minimum square-footage, have proper plumbing and wiring installed and have appropriate

exits.

Babylon has made the procedure for compliance fairly uncomplicated. But homeowners still have a maze of red tape to go through. Babylon is using a carrot-and-stick approach—amnesty now, heavy fines later.

Many residents who have not complied fear increases in their real estate taxes. Some are also not reporting this income to the IRS and might face numerous penalties as a result. The expenses of maintaining an accessory apartment, including a portion of the real estate taxes, are tax deductible items against any income. It's illegal to cheat on your taxes.

These homeowners must recognize that anyone living in an accessory apartment places an additional burden on the services provided by the school districts and the towns. These homeowners should understand that the rents are not 100% profit, they have to pay their fair share.

Other towns that are contemplating duplicating Babylon's project must remember that the key to compliance is making the procedure as simple and as economical as possible.

Most people want to do the right thing; given the opportunity, they will.

And why not?



Win Tuition at SCCC

It is *Suffolk Life's* 38th anniversary. To celebrate and in cooperation with Suffolk County Community College and Swezey's Department Stores, we are jointly awarding one recipient a fully-paid year of tuition. This scholarship is valued at \$2,300. As an alternative, if the winner chooses to go to another school, we will award \$1,000 towards tuition. In addition, three shopping sprees at Swezey's will be awarded weekly.

The entire staff at *Suffolk Life* deeply appreciates the loyalty and readership our subscribers have provided us. Because of your readership, your response to the news, and particularly to the advertisements in *Suffolk Life*, we have been able to grow from a monthly half tab publication with 9,600 circulation to one of the largest weekly newspapers in the United States with a total circulation of over 518,000.

Because of the intense readership *Suffolk Life* receives, advertisers get a phenomenal response to their ads. The ads are our financial backbone. Every page of advertising creates between one-quarter and one-third of a page of news. The more advertising *Suffolk Life* has, the more news we are able to bring you.

During the past 38 years, the trip has been extremely exciting. It's been a particular pleasure to take young, raw recruits and teach them a profession or a

trade. There is no greater pleasure than seeing someone who wants to learn and succeed become successful.

Suffolk Life has always been there for its readers. We are your eyes, your ears and, yes, your mouthpiece. We try to cover as much local news as we can.

During this past year, we have experienced substantial growth and have been able to produce a better newspaper. We have great plans for the future, but it all starts with you.

The scholarship and the shopping sprees allow us to once again give back to the community, to thank you for your loyalty, your readership and your support. All that we ask for our efforts is for you to think, act and to be a productive member of your community.

If you let "Johnny" do it, he invariably will do it to you, not for you. This is your country, your county, your town and your neighborhood. Stand up and fight for it. We will stand beside you.

Fill out the coupon. Send it in today and you or a member of your family may receive a fully-paid year of tuition at our own, wonderful college, Suffolk County Community College, or a shopping spree at Suffolk's best department store, Swezey's.

Thanks for being part of the *Suffolk Life* family.

And why not?

State Guarantee

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver's support of the LIPA deal was predicated upon a guarantee that the rates would be reduced a minimum of 14%. The guarantee received by Silver is not worth the paper it is written on.

The three parties to the deal, Governor Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Bruno and Silver, owe it to the public behind this

guarantee. If the savings do not materialize and the other provisions are not met, the State of New York should pick up the shortfall.

The three leaders control the state government, they ask Bruno and Silver to depend on their words or kill the deal by approving the bonding.

And why not?

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Wasn't Pure Water The Idea?

The pine barrens were created to protect the water that lay underneath them, so we would have pure water to drink for ever more.

The pine barrens cover close to 100,000 acres. They run from the middle of Brookhaven through parts of Riverdale and Southampton.

Recently, a local entrepreneur, Ken Tuthill, developed a company called Pine Barrens Pure. The company is in contract to buy a six-and-a-half-acre site in the heart of the pine barrens for the purpose of drilling a well and building a pumping station to extract the water for resale. The water is to be bottled under the Pine Barrens Pure label and will be sold for \$1 per pint. It will be right up there with Evian and Perrier.

A group of environmental activists is opposing this operation. If we are not going to use the water, why preserve it? *Suffolk Life* supports Tuthill in his

endeavor. It's good to see a young, local man make good and take advantage of a craze which has swept the nation.

For the life of us, we can't figure out why people will spend a buck for a bottle of water. Recently, while in Florida, a bartender told us that the resort was selling more bottled water than beer. He said that water, if clean and sterile, is just water. Because it is in a bottle, it does not have any mystical qualities. He ended his statement by saying that he didn't know why people would spend money on something they can get for free.

We agree with him. But, as long as people are willing to fork over good money, we encourage a local man to get a piece of the action. Let us use the pine barrens the way they were intended to be used.

And why not?

Ask Your Congressman

Opposition to the LIPA deal is growing as more people learn about the ramifications. Weak support is turning to opposition.

The supervisor of Southampton Town, Vincent Cannuscio, speaking at the fourth legislative hearing, stated, "the entire membership of the East End Supervisors and Mayors Association and the Suffolk County Village Officials Association and nine of the 10 supervisors in Suffolk County have expressed dissatisfaction with the LILCO/LIPA takeover agreement."

These local officials have not succumbed to the incredible pressures that are being applied by political leaders and by the governor's office. Our state assembly members and senators, for the most part, caved in to the pressure. The exceptions are assemblymen Thomas Barraga (R-West Islip) and Paul Harenberg (D-Oakdale). In fact, they not only disapprove of the deal, they have been actively fighting against it. We take our hats off to them.

Last week, in a conversation with Congressman Michael Forbes (R-Shirley), he indicated that he was opposed to the deal and I asked him why he is being silent. He gave me that crooked smile. I specifically asked him if he had contacted the IRS or had spoken to Congressman Archer, who heads the committee the IRS falls under. Forbes said, "no."

Forbes showed that he had the courage to stand up and take the heat last January when he went public and asked Gingrich to step down as Speaker. We find it strange that Forbes would not buck the politicians when it comes to such an important issue for his con-

stituents.

Congressmen Rick Lazio (R-Babylon) and Gary Ackerman (D-Huntington) have been conspicuous by their silence. They are our representatives in Washington, why are they not speaking out on our behalf? Does Wall Street and LILCO own them lock, stock and barrel, too? Don't they realize the ramifications of the deal?

Don't they realize that, in effect, the deal will put a \$23,000 mortgage on every constituent's head? Don't they realize that their constituents will be required to pay \$55 per month for the next 30 years before they buy a penny's worth of electricity? Don't they realize that every man, woman and child in the United States will be required to pay \$17.37 additional tax next year if LILCO can make a private deal with the IRS to avoid paying capital gains taxes? Don't they care?

The Long Island legislative delegation should also hang their heads in shame. Long Islanders have given the Republicans a solid majority in the senate. Long Islanders will be asking themselves come next November, "Why should I support my Republican senator when he did not support me?"

It is still not too late to learn about "the deal." Once armed with the facts, they should step forward and join the army of outraged local citizens who are fighting for not only their lives but the financial lives of their children and grandchildren.

In the coming months, this publication plans on identifying each of the participants in the conspiracy of silence and give our readers the knowledge of who supported them and who opposed them.

And why not?



Keep Politics Out Of SCCC

It's an election year. The Suffolk County Legislature is up for a vote. The silly season has begun.

The trustees of Suffolk County Community College have proposed to raise next year's tuition by a modest \$80, bringing the annual tuition to \$2,260. The tuition hike was planned last spring. It was needed to ensure that the school would be able to continue to afford to offer a topflight education to Suffolk County residents.

Since the budget was developed, it has been learned that state aid will be increased by \$50 per student this year and the bill from the state pension fund was not as high as anticipated. Some of the legislators are calling for a rollback of the tuition increase. This sounds good on the surface, but when

you realize that the state aid increase may be for only one year and the pension fund bill might be higher next year, it might be imprudent to roll back tuition now.

This rollback could leave a big gap in next year's budget that would require a huge tuition increase that future students might not be able to absorb.

It might make good politics to be able to say "I rolled back the tuition in an election year," but it may not be good administration of a school to create a huge tuition increase the year the politicians are not running.

We have trustees to run the school, let them do it without political influence.

And why not?

Fine For Feeding

A lot of silly bills are passed in the dark of the night just prior to the current session of the legislature coming to an end. One of the silliest is a bill that would make it illegal to feed deer within 300 feet of a public highway. Violators would be fined \$50 for this offense. The bill is awaiting Governor Pataki's signature and we hope he has the common sense to veto it.

Deer rarely feed at the side of the road. They do cross the roads, particularly during mating season or in search of food. There are far too many accidents, but this "no feeding" bill will do nothing to alleviate this condition.

We know of several people who regularly feed the deer during the cold winter months when food is not readily available. Most of the people who are serious about aiding animals have developed a systematic program which includes

proper foods and a regular feeding program. These people care about the animals. They enjoy the beauty of Mother Nature's creatures. Others who do not actually feed deer, but who feed birds and squirrels, inadvertently also feed the deer which eat the seeds, grains and the other nutrients.

There is no question that the deer herd on Long Island is growing out of proportion. The hunting season should be extended and a larger kill allowed. Deer do not have any natural predators on Long Island. Properly managed hunting seasons would keep the population under control and this conservation technique should be encouraged.

Let's stop being stupid by developing laws that make good-hearted people criminals.

And why not?

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Courage and Yellow Journalism

County Executive Robert Gaffney issued a Certificate of Necessity for a resolution that will place on the ballot this November, a County Charter Amendment that at long last will give the voters an opportunity to express their opinion on the LILCO-LIPA deal.

The public, the ratepayers, have been closed any avenue to express an opinion about Shoreham, the Shoreham closure and now the LILCO-LIPA agreement. They were never asked their opinion, but were expected to pay the tab. The tab has been very high, the highest electrical rates in the nation.

Due to FERC regulations, utilities are now being forced to compete. This will drive down rates in other areas of the country from 30% to 35%, rates that are already 30% to 50% cheaper than we are paying to LILCO.

The politically orchestrated Pataki-Catacosinos deal will lock in a small rate decrease for the first 10 years, but will increase the rates substantially after 10 years and bar us from the benefits of competition for the next 30 years.

It's a bad deal, it stinks, and one of the worst aspects of it was that the ratepayers were again going to be denied an opportunity to cast their vote on it.

The Suffolk County Legislature, sensing the anger of the ratepayers and the need for protection if the deal goes through, proposed this charter amendment. To get it on the ballot, Gaffney had to issue a Certificate of Necessity.

Gaffney came under incredible pressure from the governor, LILCO-LIPA officials and particularly from LILCO's public relations organ: *Newsday*.

The parties lobbying Gaffney issued just about every vile threat imaginable. *Newsday* has been ferocious in its opposition to the opponents of the deal and came down like a ton of bricks on Gaffney for signing the Certificate of Necessity that will allow the people to cast a vote.

What is wrong with *Newsday*? Since the deal was announced, it has been a strong supporter. That's fine, that's its prerogative—as long as its opinions are kept to the editorial page.

Unfortunately, the vehement support of LILCO and the LIPA deal precluded that tabloid from acting like objective journalists. As important stories and consultant reports were released, *Newsday* all but blacked-out coverage of these important news-sensitive events. It denied its subscribers the important details and the pros and cons that were contained in the

information. This is journalism at its worst.

After Gaffney stood up to the powers that be, including *Newsday*, and issued the Certificate of Necessity so that the people could be heard, *Newsday* called this courageous act cowardice. It went after Gaffney personally, in a vicious manner unbecoming the professionals they pretend to be.

Newsday is so used to being the bully that it has abandoned any journalistic standards or objectivity. We have seen *Newsday* sink to lows before, but nothing compares to the tactics they have used over the LILCO-LIPA deal.

Can it be that the only thing *Newsday* is concerned about is protecting the arrangement it has to buy electricity from LILCO at 4 cents per kilowatt hour, while its subscribers are paying 17.5 cents and its competitors as much as 28 cents per kilowatt hour?

Why would *Newsday* so ferociously try to sell the LILCO-LIPA deal that will ultimately crucify its subscribers? Is the paper so in-bed with LILCO that it can't see the forest for the trees? Who is *Newsday* responsible to, its readers or Wall Street?

The first order of a newspaper is to represent the best interests of its readers and subscribers. Maybe it's time for another daily newspaper on Long Island. A newspaper that not only knows the principles of journalism, but practices them. For a newspaper to be so authoritarian, to believe that appointed officials know better than the people who are paying the bills, is ludicrous.

The county's charter amendment, which you will vote upon, gives you the only opportunity you will have to vote on the LILCO-LIPA deal.

The Charter Amendment not only gives the county the empowerment to challenge the deal, but gives the county the authority to hold LIPA's feet to the fire and to ensure that the promises are kept.

Right now, the promises that were made aren't worth the paper they are written on. There is no agency that will conduct a meaningful review of the authority. An authority is a power unto itself.

We congratulate Gaffney for his courage and the Suffolk legislature for acting on the people's behalf.

If you, the ratepayers, are incensed by *Newsday's* behavior, you might consider giving them a lesson in economics: cancel your subscription, it's worth about \$5,000 to them.

And why not?

School Tax Trap

We were delighted when we heard that Governor Pataki's STAR program, designed to reduce residential real estate taxes by 27% to 45%, had passed the

state legislature. Before commenting on it, we decided to wait for the details, where the devil always resides.

Pataki's original proposal called for



the state to assume a much greater portion of school costs. The schools were to decrease their reliance on real estate taxes by 27% for individuals under 65 years of age and by 45% for those in their senior years. School budgets were to be capped at the rate of inflation or 4%, whichever was smaller.

The assembly, led by Sheldon Silver, opposed the caps. They didn't mind increasing the state's contribution, but they did not want to put any checks on the school boards.

Silver is a far better negotiator than Governor Pataki. The state has increased its proportion of aid and there is nothing in the law that will mandate that the schools use this windfall to reduce taxes. There are no penalties for increasing their

spending beyond the rate of inflation of 4% per year.

If school boards follow the patterns of the past, they will spend every nickel on increased programs, equipment and raises for personnel. The taxpayers, for whom this relief was intended, will see no benefit. Their real estate taxes will not go down, but the state's obligation will go up.

The only thing that will stop the squandering of this new state aid is a vigilant population, the close monitoring of the school board year-round and support of candidates for the school board who are cost-conscious and who will do what the legislation was intended to do. It's up to us, folks.

And why not?

Clinton Uses Line Item Veto

We well remember President Ronald Reagan, in one of his State of the Union addresses, hauling out a 19-inch-high document and stating, "This is the federal budget. I have two choices—accept every item in it, or reject the budget and close down the government. Presidents, both Democratic and Republican, like 40 state governors already have, need a line item veto."

Reagan was right, and it took Newt Gingrich's Contract With America, a Republican Congress and a Republican Senate to finally enact this measure into law. It went into effect January 1, 1997.

The line item veto gives the president the right to veto individual items contained in the budget. If used with discretion, it will enable the chief executive to eliminate fat,

waste and pure patronage.

Clinton vetoed three items in this year's budget. Two were breaks for narrow special interests, and one eliminated a practice used in New York State to inflate medical bills through a tax so the state could garner a larger percentage of reimbursement from the federal government. This is going to cost New York State about \$200 million—\$200 million it didn't deserve in the first place.

It is expected, after these vetoes, that the line item veto will be challenged in courts and eventually end up at the Supreme Court. We pray the Supreme Court justices will read the law and the Constitution in favor of the people and let the law stand. Time will tell.

And why not?

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Open Letter to Governor Pataki

Recently, we wrote the following letter to Governor George Pataki. We are awaiting his reply.

Dear Governor Pataki:

Some of the premises that you based your decision to support the LILCO-LIPA deal on are not sustainable. The deal, made by your predecessor, Mario Cuomo, covered only a lifespan of three years. This was a contract. The balance of his deal was an agreement that did not carry the weight of law. This has been documented in a number of legal opinions, it is not David Willmott saying it.

The Public Service Commission, by its charter, cannot be bound to set rates for a period of more than three years. In fact, the PSC has already disregarded the Cuomo deal and has not increased rates according to the terms and conditions of that deal after the third year.

Public Service Commissions across the nation, and in New York, are ordering utilities to abandon all or portions of their stranded investments. The New York State Public Service Commission, acting on your instructions, can revisit the Shoreham issue and modify the Shoreham debt, particularly if there was an accurate accounting done that indicated exactly what the ratepayers have already contributed for the construction of Shoreham and paid in rates since the Cuomo deal.

A solid case can be made that LILCO did not use the rates attributable to Shoreham to pay down debt. Instead, LILCO used that money to increase dividends and increased the value of its stock. This could be construed as being imprudent and give the Public Service Commission grounds to charge the company back for this misappropriation of funds.

Your desire to bring electrical rates down on Long Island is admirable. But there are alternatives: The California Public Service Commission and the Massachusetts PSC have developed a plan to produce savings of 30% to 35% in these states. This will bring their utility rate to 6 cents or 7 cents per kilowatt hour.

Under the LIPA proposal, our rates will be reduced from 17 cents to 14 cents per kilowatt hour and then will accelerate in the last two-thirds period of the 30-year deal. The rates will be reduced in part because we will be borrowing money over the first 10 years to subsidize current rates that will have to be paid back during the next 20 to 30 years. This is not prudent nor fiscally sound.

A year ago, the Public Service Commission staff had recommended to the commission that LILCO reduce its rates by 5% to bring the utility's operation and maintenance costs in line with peer utilities. Because of the LIPA negotiations, this rate reduction was not put into effect. If this recommendation was enacted today, and combined with the synergy

savings from the BUG-LILCO deal, rates would be reduced 7% to 8%. We would not have to have a 40-year bond which will cost every rate paying family on Long Island \$23,000 to fund.

If the Public Service Commission were to treat LILCO as it is treating other utilities throughout the state, further savings could be developed.

Pressure from FERC is expected to result in 25% to 35% savings on utility rates across the country by the year 2002. Reducing Suffolk's current rate from 17 cents to 14 cents does little to make us competitive, when the rest of the nation will be paying between 6 and 7 cents.

It is expected, by the year 2002, utility rates throughout the country will be in the 6 to 8 cent range per kilowatt hour. Under this new deal, we will be locked into the highest rates in the nation for more than 30 years. That's not good economics and it is not fair to the public.

If this new deal is not approved, LILCO will face competition or go bankrupt. This deal saves them from that fate, but penalizes the economic engine of New York State for LILCO's past malfeasance.

It is disappointing to find that we are on the opposite side of the track that you are on. We have had respect for you and many of the things you have been able to accomplish. This deal, however, overshadows all the rest and considerably lessens our enthusiasm.

We know you are terribly busy and have had to rely on others to provide you with information. We request that you personally look at the facts, read the legal opinions and the obligations of the Public Service Commission in reference to the Cuomo deal and the stranded Shoreham investment.

We do not see how you can come to a conclusion that does not allow for the Public Service Commission to act responsibly and mitigate against the ratepayers assuming the full obligation for LILCO's mistakes.

We know John Powell had asked you to bail out Brookhaven and Suffolk County from the certiorari suit. This no longer should be an issue as the county is moving to dedicate a quarter-percent of our sales tax, which will take care of the major portion of the problem. With this out of the way, there is no real political need for this deal.

At this point, you can only be hurt by this issue. All the good things that you have accomplished will be forgotten and you could very well lose Suffolk County and probably Nassau in the election.

Mario chose to wear blinders on this issue and was blindsided by it. He didn't understand the anger and frustration of the Islanders and it appears that your staff has kept you sheltered also.

It's now time for you to reconsider and reevaluate.

And why not?



Truthful Review of Social Security

There are those that say the Social Security fund is in grand shape and it can go on forever without reform or restructuring. There are others that paint a grim picture of what will happen to the system in the future.

In 1945, during the early days of the Social Security system, there were 20 workers to support one recipient. In 1996, there were only 3.1 workers contributing to the support of a Social Security recipient.

As the baby boomers retire between the years 2010 and 2030, there will only be 1.8 workers for each Social Security recipient.

It is projected that by the year 2012, the Social Security system will have to trim \$3 trillion in proposed expenditures, tax every family in America \$42,857, or the worst of all options, increase the national debt by 36%.

As the years go by, the picture gets gloomier. Many economists and think tanks have proposed switching Social Security from its current system to a "pay as you go" system.

Under this proposal, part of the Social Security funds would continue to go to the

government to pay for current beneficiaries. Part of the contributors' funds would go into an investment fund that would grow and expand with the profits being returned to the contributors at their retirement age. This would allow for the Social Security fund to remain solvent and Social Security payments to keep up with or exceed inflation.

One thing is certain, we cannot allow the system to continue as it is currently structured. A grassroots organization has been put together called Economic Security 2000. They intend to explore all the options available and develop a grassroots educational campaign so that the public can be brought out of the dark and be able to make intelligent decisions.

Hopefully, our national leaders will pay close attention to this group, digest the information it will be presenting and have the courage to formulate a governmental policy that will benefit all the people of the United States.

Suffolk Life intends to follow this movement and bring you the information as it is unveiled.

And why not?

End Corporate Welfare in Suffolk

The taxpayers have been subsidizing a small group of title insurance companies ever since the county agreed to lease 3,000 square feet to them in 1985 for a total of \$63,525 a year. That averages out to each title company paying about \$21 a square foot while Suffolk has been spending much more than that to rent space for some of its county employees.

Why are these private companies paying less than the county for leased space? This agreement has not been amended for the past 12 years. Although the county has been paid for the use of this space, it never charged these title insurance companies for the use of fax machines, photocopy machines, telephones, security, the use of staff members in the county clerk's office, and access to county records and computer

system.

Now, the county legislature is considering a measure that would eliminate that subsidy, choose the title companies through a lottery and charge a fair market fee for that space as well as charging utility and service fees.

County officials believe that the new fee structure proposed in the bill will provide another \$150,000 to the county and that is good.

We do not know why the county has taken so long to correct this injustice, but we applaud the legislature, especially Fred Towle, who sponsored the bill, for demonstrating to the taxpayers that county government is for the benefit of the public, not a provider of corporate welfare.

And why not?