

Weld: Our man is still timid, but looks when he started from New

Columbia University in the City of New York | New York, N.Y. 10027

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

712 Hamilton Hall
Dec. 24, 1969

Hon. Stanley Steingut
Minority Leader
Room 344 Capital Building
Labany, N.y. 12224

Dear Mr. Steingut:

It is with pleasure that I send a copy of my study, CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON PROPERTY TAXING AND BORROWING POWERS IN NEW YORK. When you and your staff have finished immediate work with it, you might send the copy along to the legislative library for more or less permanent availability.

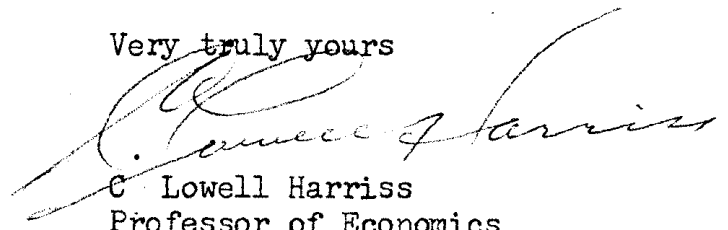
In one respect this study fails significantly to reflect my views. Higher tax rates on land seem to me eminently desirable. Many reasons support this view, and I am enclosing a somewhat preliminary paper on the subject. I do hope that your staff can give it very careful attention.

My present view would be against higher total property taxes in most of New York until the basic reform of differentiating land and structures can be put into effect. Even then, I would probably oppose higher total burdens, though on this I would want further analysis. But by altering the proportions to put more on land and less on improvements the State could materially improve this revenue source and in doing so encourage other desirable changes.

I would not go so far so quickly as Mrs. Hickman is pressing in California--for complete shift to land as the base. Yet she does seem to me to be on the right track. Your staff might want to get in touch with the people in the California Legislature working on the subject. I suspect from their contacts with me that they have assembled about as much and as good material on the subject of property taxation as available anywhere around.

Please be assured of my best wishes.

Very truly yours



C Lowell Harriss
Professor of Economics