

services available, will not be able to meet this liability, hence the closures that we are talking about. As time passes and these tanks are taken out of the ground and the problems are mitigated, the needs for this type of a bill will diminish down the road, whether it is five, ten, or fifteen years. The need for this bill will probably not exist any longer, but in the meantime, we, as Nebraskans, need to face the responsibilities that we have. This is just one facet of the environmental problems we face with our small towns and our open landfills and dumps, and various other environmental problems. They must be faced and I would say that when this bill comes to the end of its usefulness, one of the things we are going to have to address is what will we do with this fund when it is no longer needed, and, perhaps, we should do that on Select File also. I would heartily support the committee amendments and intend to be a part of the working process getting the bill ready for Select File and the debate we will have there. I would urge the passage of LB 289 to Select File today. Thank you.

SPEAKER BARRETT: Thank you. Senator Smith, followed by Senator Hartnett.

SENATOR SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Members of the body, I hope that you realize that this is a very, very important, in fact, a very crucial issue that we deal with, and that we take the time to deal with this. We did in the committee. We worked with this issue, and worked with it, and worked with it. No matter what we did, we felt like we still were in a total new area which is going to be so important for the future of Nebraska and for Nebraskans, but at the same time, we want to be sure that we are doing some things that will be right. As has already been mentioned here, you know that we have EPA requirements regarding financial responsibility of station owners regarding technical matters and insurance, and if they can't get their insurance, which is absolutely prohibitive at this time, by a certain date, and I don't know exactly what that is, probably about a year and a half, maybe not even that long now, many of them will have to go out of business, and as you know, many of the small business, owners of small gas stations are located in the little towns across Nebraska, and it has been estimated that approximately 80 percent of these little gas stations will be forced to close if we can't come up with something that will help them to meet EPA's requirements. At the same time, we had such frustration in committee because of the fact that we didn't want to give powers to the Department of