

- leaking into our groundwater and causing some environmental damage, but the concern I have that I would like Senator Schmit to address, if he would, I see a handout from Senator Hefner that says "Small towns face loss of gas stations" and, it is really a compassionate story about the small gas station operator in the small towns, it doesn't have to be a small town, it could be in Lincoln. I know there are some small operators in my district. They are the guys that have the lower cost gasoline. They are the ones that are the cut-rate individuals that keep everybody else's gasoline prices down, and they just don't operate on much of a margin of profit, and I am just kind of wondering, Senator Schmit, if you could...there is the big guys and the little guys in this operation, how do they come out on this deal and are we going to force out the small operators? And this is not this bill doing it, but, federally, are we charging the same to both the small and the big? How about the small operator in Bellwood or even in my district, and how do they come out on this deal, and can we do anything to help them?

SENATOR SCHMIT: I am really glad you asked that question, Senator Wesely, about as glad as I am to hope for a hailstorm really because, obviously, the little guy is not going to come out probably quite so well as the big guy, and we have discussed this to a certain extent, and as you well know, \$25,000 of maximum contribution can be a tremendous burden for a station operator, Mr. Hammel in Clatonia or Mr. Rehm in Clatonia, whoever he is, or for someone in Bruno or Abie, whereas it might be just a very small portion of the day's receipts for some other company, and that is a question which legitimately needs to be asked on this floor, and we ought to I suppose address it because there was some concern as to whether or not the amount of the responsibility per leak ought to be based upon the volume of business, for example, as opposed to just a flat \$25,000 maximum, and the counterargument of that is, well, if you get a bad leak, it can be just as bad from a 1,000 gallon tank in Abie as it is from a multithousand gallon system in Fremont, Nebraska, where Senator Lowell Johnson has some very large establishments. But the thing that concerns me is that we may, even with this bill, force out of business, and I think Senator Hefner can touch on that, too, a number of small operators, and we don't want to do that. We hope we're helping to preserve them. I'm not sure that we're doing it the way we want to, Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Well, Senator Schmit, I know we don't have time