

SPEAKER BARRETT: Senator Schmit, on the Warner amendment.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, there's been a lot of discussion and there ought to be more. As I told you when I first introduced this bill and I thought maybe then I would use that practice from now on because I told you what a complicated, terrible bill it had the possibilities of developing into and it didn't get a single negative vote when it moved off General File, Mr. Speaker, and that's not too bad a practice I think. But the point is that we do have a serious problem. The problem that Senator Warner outlined did have a beginning created by this Legislature and there are so many times on this floor that we create inequities. Let me point out another inequity. It is probably totally inequitable as to how we are paying for it. We are allowing the...requiring the consumer to pay for this program, and I don't know if, for example, I came to this body with a problem relative to nitrates that involved agriculture and we were to put a tax on food, I really don't know that I would get much support for that but that may be the only way you could pay for it. Senator Lamb has pointed out that unless we do something, it is very, very likely that in many of the small communities we will not have a source of fuel. And so is it cheaper for myself and Senator Lamb to pay a small additional amount on our fuel so we don't have to pay for the cost of delivering fuel 25 or 50 miles to our farms? You know it's a matter of balance. My reason for supporting the Warner amendment is very simple. In the protection of the environment, I have historically tried to act on the premise that an innocent contamination, an inadvertent spill, a problem which resulted as a lack of proper technology in the past should not now necessarily become the responsibility of the individual who is involved. I wish, if I had the time, I would give you a personal experience which turned out all right but which could have been very, very disastrous because of the lack of technology available at the time when I could have been involved. But what we are saying here today is that because these individuals were caught in a time frame they perhaps should not be covered. Senator Warner is not asking that money expended be reimbursed. He is saying that from this point forward we have in place a proposal and a mechanism which will deal with the problem. So if someone spent \$100,000 prior to the time that this is in place, they won't be reimbursed. But if they have an ongoing problem, then they should be reimbursed and I find it very, very difficult to stand here and argue against that. I do so because I look at now it's going to be