

about a dozen, that had occurred during the replacement of underground tanks. In every single instance that Mr. Barnett cited, the problem was caused when an individual struck up an acetylene torch and proceeded to cut on a tank. There was not one single evidence of an accident by virtue of the operator of the backhoe. I would hope that this body would adopt this amendment which states that the operator, an individual who removes or installs a tank, does not need to be licensed. I'm sure you can think of a dozen reasons why they should be. But, ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to tell you the only reason and the principal reason. The principal reason is why we do many such foolish things. We build a fence around a little bit of an industry, and we take a whole group of people over here and we say, you can't do this because you're not licensed, but you can because you're licensed. And so you have some entrepreneur who decides to become an experienced backhoe operator and he qualifies for the license because he learns all the lingo and a man who has done it for 40 years can't qualify. We've done it with well license...licensing of well drillers, we've had some problems. We're trying to work it out. But we do it time, after time, after time. When this Legislature does it, and we do it knowledgeably, knowingly, and intentionally, that's one thing, but when it's done by rule and regulation, after the fact, I think it's wrong. At least I want this Legislature to vote on whether or not you believe that the backhoe operator who removes a tank ought to, in fact, be a licensed backhoe operator. Now someone said, well, most of them can get licensed. I'm sure they could. Let me tell you what happened when we went from the unlicensed backhoe operator to the licensed backhoe operator. The cost of removing a tank in my area prior to that time was about \$250. When we went to the requirement that the operator be licensed, the removal went to 2,500, \$2,500, up 10 times. It is this sort of thing, ladies and gentlemen, which drives the public up the wall. It is this sort of rule or regulation in statute which unnecessarily increases the cost of doing business. It is that sort of expense which gives our local petroleum distributor reason to be critical of this Legislature and even the legislation which they want and which they need very much. I respect what Senator Robak says, of course, Senator Robak is trying to do the right thing. And Senator Robak has taken the bill as her priority and I commend her for it. I have no objection to the bill. I carried the bill once. What I'm saying is this, the bill ought to make sense. And for us to blindly, because someone says that we've got to have it, proceed to enact into statute a piece of