

business, as well as, and I must emphasize this again, as well as protect the environment from future releases into our soil and groundwater. Now I was handed a note during Senator Elmer's remarks that Neal Miesbach of the Nebraska Insurance Agents Association of Nebraska did testify, and he reminds me they did testify that they felt there was inadequate third party liability coverage in Nebraska, and that it was at extremely high cost, if there is some coverage available. But again, Senator Landis, you ask a very difficult question that we struggled with, that I struggled with as to getting into this social program, because that's really what it is, to support an industry. And I guess all I can say is we're trying our best to meet the needs that are out there and to protect our environment. And I think your question goes to the heart of Senator Beutler's arguments, is that should the State of Nebraska be in a position where it is basically moving an industry away from private industry or insurance to a state program. That's a question I guess we're going to continue to argue as this bill moves across the floor but, from my perspective, there are justifiable reasons for doing that at this time. And, as Senator Elmer has indicated, we have an awful lot of old, ancient tanks that are out there, that have been in the ground for many years, 20, 30 years, that need to be brought...dug up and brought out of the ground and replaced and, hopefully, we can do that in an orderly manner. I was just told we have something like 11,000 registered tanks in Nebraska, that's just the registered tanks above 1,100 gallons. No one knows how many more we might have that are not registered. But it does go to show you the magnitude of the problem out there. And it's very difficult, from talking with different individuals, to find the adequate type of insurance that I might need to protect my business in this area of the potential of a release, as well as the potential of damages to third parties. So I've done an inadequate job of trying to answer Senator Landis's question, because I really don't have one, other than to say that this bill does have some inequities, but I think the goal behind the program is still worthwhile, and I guess I recognize that. But I still think the bill is worthwhile passing this year.

SPEAKER BAACK: Thank you, Senator Rod Johnson. Senator Landis, did you wish to...

SENATOR LANDIS: Yes, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. I appreciate Senator Johnson's candor and explanation. Seems to