

fund will have to be increased to meet this increased need, basically, that increased need is going to be met by increased gas taxes. So, once again, an enormous burden has already been placed on the taxpayer. The taxpayer is the insurer of these particular...of these particular entrepreneurs. Instead of having private insurance, we have this kind of socialized insurance, and we are justifying it because of the crisis of the times. But I think that we ought not to make it worse than it already is, and that we ought to insist in the future that the fund be returned to the normal private enterprise method of doing business because that is the way we ensure that individual operators are taking a tough look at their own costs and at their own operating procedures to be sure they don't have spills. So, once again, I don't think it is fair to burden the gas taxpayer with increased costs, when they are already shouldering an unprecedented burden by supporting this kind of fund by insuring these free enterprise people through a public insurance fund. I think we need to get out of that business as soon as we can, and we ought not to make it any worse than we have to while we are in it. Thank you.

SENATOR MORRISSEY: Thank you, Senator Beutler. Our next speaker is Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Mr. President and members, I would have to agree with some of what Senator Beutler says. I am not so sure that we ought to be in the business in the first place because it is an unprecedented position for this Legislature to mandate that the consumer of the product be the individual or the group of individuals who pay for most of the cleanup of the environmental problem. The reason that we bought the proposal that was brought to us is this. As is the case in many other instances, the service station operators were operating according to law for many, many years. They operated under the best technology available, and all of a sudden, as it has happened so often, we discovered that we had a problem. I am not so sure the problem is as severe as we have been told that it is. It may well be that it is not. What we did when we passed the original bill was to place the small operator in the same position financially, the man of the station that pumps 50,000 gallons per year basically has to bear about the same burden as does the station that pumps 50 or 100 thousand gallons of fuel per day. Now I think that we also on this floor stated, and I hope that some of my rural senators will stand up and back me up on this, we stated that the purpose of the bill was to,