

me that there are a couple of different pieces in this puzzle, one of them is the goal. And the goal, I think, is beyond reproach. Senator Johnson reminded me, at the end of his remarks, that, in fact, the goal is so important as one that we really need to pursue, even though we may not have ironed out all of the equities in the measure, it's just simply too overwhelming a social responsibility and cost not to do something about immediately. I think that also was Senator Elmer's point as well. And on this point we're all agreed. I agree that there has to be a form of proceeding on underground storage tanks. As a matter of fact, the original bill is mine. Senator Beutler and I introduced it a number of years ago, and then he left the Legislature and we passed it upon his absence. And in that sense I agree absolutely, the goal has to be accomplished. I would say that there are a couple of pieces that we need to continue to consider. One, if there is, and this is a big if, if there is a private insurance market out there that some people can afford, and they are doing that, I'm not sure why the taxpayer should step in and undo that private insurance transaction and relieve that person of that responsibility. If it is available and affordable, and that's a big if, I'm not so sure that we have to rush in with a social program and transfer that cost to society when a private insurance mechanism may exist. Now, that's a big if, and I think there's a factual showing to see if that if is present. But, if it is true, then it seems to me that the equities are such that we probably need to conceive of the social responsibility as being that to whom there are inadequate existing resources to meet the goal, people who'd have needs but can't afford it. I think we ought to rush in and pick up the tab and make sure this happens for those people who can't afford it. But, if they can afford it, and there is a mechanism out there in the private marketplace to do it, it seems to me we need to continue to search to refine this mechanism to take account of that phenomenon, if it's true. I'm told that there is private insurance, I'm told that it's available, it's probably arguable as to whether it's affordable, whether or not people are buying it, I suppose, is the test of whether it is affordable. And, in that sense probably we ought to be thinking about 409 as a needs based program rather than a social entitlement across the board. That would permit the private industry to function where it can. It would bear a responsibility on those people who can afford it to pay for it, and for those people who can't afford to pay for it, a social program, a safety net to make sure the goal is met. We should,