

work for me, so I am going to return to my office. I understand this was unanticipated, and that is the way it goes sometimes.

Mrs. BOXER. I am so sorry. This has been a contentious matter.

So I would say to Senator MANCHIN, if you want to go first, then I will follow, and I am sure Senator THUNE will have comments.

Mr. THUNE. I will request, through the Chair, if the Senator from Maine is not going to speak, that I be allowed to speak at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from California and the Senator from West Virginia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from California.

FEINBERG CONFIRMATION

Mr. MANCHIN. I come to the floor to speak on behalf of the Acting Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, who is no longer acting but now our Administrator and my friend, Sarah Feinberg.

As a native West Virginian, she has the same pragmatic approach to problem solving that we see among our congressional delegation every day. When it comes to politics in West Virginia, it really doesn't matter whether you are a Democrat or a Republican. What matters is if you can get the job done.

During my time in the State legislature, Sarah's father, Lee Feinberg, and I served together. At that time Lee was head of the West Virginia Governmental Ethics Commission, and he instilled in her the same sense of moral responsibility that also led him into public service. Today she sits before the Senate, seeking to continue in public service as the Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, and I am so pleased this has happened.

Over the past 9 months, I believe she has proved herself to be an effective and engaged leader with the courage to make tough decisions and the character to accept the criticism they often incite. She was baptized by fire after being appointed to this position on January 9 of this year and leading the agency's response to five major incidents within her first 60 days at the helm.

On February 3, six people were killed when a commuter train hit an SUV at a grade crossing in Valhalla, NY. On February 4, 14 tank cars carrying ethanol derailed just north of Dubuque, IA. Three of them caught fire. On February 16, 27 tank cars derailed outside Mount Carbon, WV, releasing 378,000 gallons of crude oil and igniting a fire that destroyed a nearby house. On February 24, a commuter train in Oxnard, CA, hit a tractor-trailer at a grade crossing and jumped the tracks. On March 6, 21 cars derailed outside of Galena, IL, near the border with Wisconsin, and five of them caught fire.

I am a firm believer that elected officials need to be on the ground in emer-

gency situations, supporting first responders and assisting those in need, and I was impressed by Ms. Feinberg's response to the Mount Carbon derailment in West Virginia, which I witnessed firsthand. Five weeks into her new job, she executed an efficient and effective Federal response that was one of the best I have ever seen in my experience as an elected official and a public servant.

There are a lot of smart policy people here in Washington, DC, but the best policy in the world will not mean a thing if it doesn't translate into anything in the real world. Sarah's response to the Mount Carbon accident showed me that she understood that, and that gave me faith in her ability not just to lead but to listen to the people we are here to serve.

Over the past 10 years, the increase in domestic energy production has been an engine of economic growth. The Energy Information Administration predicts that growth will continue through 2020. From 2009 until 2014, crude oil production in the United States increased by more than 62 percent—up from 5.35 million barrels per day in 2009 to 8.68 million barrels a day in 2014—and the majority of this product is moving by rail.

In 2008, our railroads moved a meager 9,500 tank cars carrying crude oil. Last year, that number grew to 500,000 tank cars—a 5,000-percent increase. That is unbelievable.

Unprecedented new challenges come along with the new economic opportunities presented by the growth in domestic energy production, and Ms. Feinberg's experience makes her uniquely qualified to lead the FRA through this transition. As Chief of Staff to Secretary Foxx, she helped the Department of Transportation develop a holistic strategy to improve the safety and security of crude by rail that required coordination between multiple administrations within the Department.

The tough new tank car safety regulations that were finalized in May were dependent on close collaboration between the FRA and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. Sarah's experience in the Secretary's office and her existing relationships throughout the Department allow her to cut through redtape and get the right people in the room to get the job done.

While the new rules do not solve every problem, they represent a major step in the right direction. They satisfy all or part of 10 outstanding National Transportation Safety Board recommendations, including all 4 recommendations that were made in April of this year.

Since taking the helm at the FRA earlier this year, I have been very much impressed with Ms. Feinberg's willingness to tackle difficult issues and engage stakeholders about realistic solutions. In May, she convened a positive train control task force to try

to identify opportunities for the FRA to help railroads meet their 2015 deadline and become a real part in this process. I think her proactive approach to problem-solving will be an asset to the FRA and the entire Department of Transportation.

I thank Chairman THUNE and Ranking Member NELSON for moving her nomination through the committee yesterday on a strong bipartisan vote of 19 to 1. I want to thank all my colleagues for not only nominating Sarah but confirming her today. I think she will be a great asset to our country and do us all proud.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I will take my time now. I know my friend wanted to have a little time, so I will yield to Senator INHOFE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, I know the Senator from California was disappointed in a few things that went on procedurally, and I am very much in sympathy. But far more significant than that is the bill we are talking about now. We made a tremendous advance to it just a few minutes ago. We did what the House has already done. We are now extended to the 20th of November.

It is my understanding that the House is going to be taking up—we are talking about the highway bill. A lot of things we talk about around here are not very important. We all have different ideas about what is and is not important, but still we have that Constitution, and the Constitution says what we are supposed to be doing. What we are supposed to be doing here is defending America and roads and bridges. That is what we are supposed to be doing.

Senator BOXER and I—she is a very proud liberal and I am a very proud conservative—have recognized what our duty is when we come here, and the second most important bill every year—not every year, because we have the Defense authorization bill every year, but not the Transportation authorization bill. That is what is important, and that is what we are supposed to be doing here.

What we did a few minutes ago is very significant. We are on the same page as the House, and that is to have a bill done and on the President's desk by the 20th of November, which is going to be right before we have a break for Thanksgiving. It now looks like we are assured of doing that.

I have to say that in working over the years with Senator BOXER, we have worked in a capacity in which she was the chairman of that committee and I was the ranking member; then I was the chairman of the committee and she