know the ultimate end point of this research does not mean we have to change course at this time. Independent reviews support this position. The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board, I repeat, says keep the present course. We need not do anything more than we currently have for many years. There is no crisis. There is no need for new regulation.

We have heard referred to on a number of occasions today what the Washington Post said. The Washington Post is a newspaper that we in Washington read on occasion. I misplaced my copy. I appreciate a copy being handed to me. It is on every desk in the Chamber. The Post said today, among other things, in one sentence that sums up this whole debate:

This is too important a decision to be jammed through the latter part of Congress on the strength of the industry's fabricated claim that it faces an emergency.

This, Mr. President, is not a statement made by the Senator from Nevada but a statement made by the editorial board of one of the largest, most prominent newspapers in the United States. There is no crisis.

We have also heard people say that S. 1936 does address the problems of S. 1271, its predecessor bill. Not true. They claim that the deficiencies in S. 1271 have been corrected in S. 1936. They acknowledge that there were problems with S. 1271 and they have taken care of them. Not true.

My colleague spoke at some length about why that is a fabrication. There is new window dressing. A new paint has been put on the same old wreck of a house but under the paint you still have the very old wood that will not last long. Substantive changes simply have not been made. S. 1936 still preempts all State and local laws and essentially all Federal laws. S. 1936 undermines the objectivity of the scientific research at Yucca Mountain. The criticisms by the President of the United States of S. 1936 are just as valid as his criticisms of S. 1271. There have been no substantive changes. That is why the President last night through his Chief of Staff did not sign a letter to the minority leader outlining his objections to this disastrous law, S. 1936, until it was thoroughly reviewed by the entire staff the White House.

You do not have to take my word. You can just read the bill. For example, take page 73 of this bill entitled ''General and Miscellaneous Provisions,'' and its subheading is ''Section 501, Compliance with Other Laws.''

If the requirements of any law are inconsistent with or duplicative of the requirements of * * * this act, the Secretary shall comply only with the requirements of the * * * act in implementing the integrated management system. Any requirement of a State or political subdivision of a State is preempted if—

And it outlines the ifs; not very broad except it just emasculates every environmental law we have passed within the last 25 years:

Complying with such requirement and a requirement of this act is impossible; or—

Listen to this dandy:

Such requirement, as applied or enforced, is an obstacle to * * * this act * * *

I do not know what an obstacle is, but it does not take much.

One of the things that we have not talked about that we should be talking about, Mr. President, is the NRC, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, certification requirements for spent fuel transportation. And what I want to talk about there is that the certification requirements for spent fuel transportation containers certainly are not insurance against the consequences of a remote accident. And I might add, they are certainly not insurance against any act, but the consequences of an accident will not observe the boundaries of where the accident occurs. Just because the accident might be remote is no basis for comfort. And we know, we have described where the railroads and the highways go. Fifty million people live within a mile of the highways and railroads.

Radioactive waste will burn and disburse many tens of thousands of miles before deposition and contamination of far distant territory takes place. We know by looking at what happened at Chernobyl, Olga Korbut, the great Olympian I talked about earlier today, who lived 100 miles from Chernobyl, is dying of her disease that came about as a result of this nuclear accident. Are we going to warn this at-risk population, this 50 million people along the transportation route, are we going to warn them to stay tuned to some emergency frequency just in case something unexpected happens? Chernobyl never happened until it happened. Now we are concerned of other Chernobyls. And if we do that, that is, warn the at-risk population to stay tuned, what are we going to tell them if an accident does happen? Who will help? When will they help? Who will be liable?

The term ''mobile Chernobyl'' has been coined for this legislation. A trainload of waste may not contain the potential for disaster that Chernobyl did, but the result will be little different for those affected by the inevitable accident. I submit that we are not prepared to implement the transportation of this hazardous material—not today, not tomorrow. The risk is real, and we are responsible for ensuring readiness and preparation to reduce it to minimal levels of both probability and consequence. It does not make sense to double that risk by premature and unnecessary transportation to an interim storage site that has not been determined to be the final site where these materials are to be disposed.

Terrorism, vandalism and protests. Unforeseeable accidents, even of small likelihood, are intolerable in the absence of responsible capability to respond to these accidents. Accidents are only one kind of a problem we must be able to deal with. We must be capable of dealing with accidents, but it is only one of the problems that develop. Much has been spoken recently of America's vulnerability to both domestic and foreign attacks. It really saddens me to agree that some of America's enemies today are American citizens. Misguided as they may be, enemies they certainly are. Vipers in Arizona—we have on film their little escapades, blowing up things. We had someone who was able to infiltrate that group, who heard the statements they made: Anybody who talks against them to authority, we will kill them. But that is only one of many.

The trade center in New York blown asunder, Oklahoma City—we can go all over the country and find these acts of terrorism that have taken place. But we certainly must look at our own States: Reno, Bureau of Land Management, roof blown off; IRS building, the bomb which was a dud; Carson City, Forest Service wall blown off; part of a Forest Ranger's home blown up.

So we know they are out there. There are known enemies of America and the values it promotes and stands for. Because of our constitutional rights, which are our national heritage, we cannot deny our enemies many of the same freedoms we ourselves enjoy.

Mr. President, I see the leader on the floor. I will be happy, at such time as he wants me to desist for whatever he might want to do—I will be happy to do that. All he has to do is give me the word.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, if the distinguished Senator is at a point where it would be appropriate?

Mr. REID. Certainly.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, we are in the process, now, of working with both sides to see if we cannot come up with a further agreement with regard to how we would handle the nuclear waste issue. We do have some agreements that have been worked out on the Executive Calendar and on a couple of bills. I would like to go ahead and get those done. These have been cleared with the Democratic leadership. Then, as soon as we get this other agreement finally worked out, we will take that up.

MORNING BUSINESS

(During today's session of the Senate, the following morning business was transacted.)

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

SAFE DRINKING WATER

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, there is an old adage that, ''You never miss the water until the well runs dry.'' I come to the Senate floor today to speak about an issue that is essential to the health and well-being of every American—safe drinking water. All life as we know it depends on the necessary element of water.

Most Americans take safe drinking water for granted. Most Americans just

assume that when they turn on the faucet, clean water will automatically flow out of the faucet. They assume that there will always be easy access to an unlimited supply of clean, safe drinking water. Only recently, the residents of the District of Columbia discovered that safe drinking water is no longer one of life's certainties. They found themselves and their families to be quite unexpectedly vulnerable—vulnerable to a possible contaminated water supply. Washington officials announced that certain residents should boil water, and that the city would increase chlorine levels for several days to cleanse possible contaminates in aging water pipes. Although this condition was said to be only temporary, and it is reported that the water is now safe, an outcry of rage arose. District residents were annoyed. They were upset. They were inconvenienced.

The Washington Times of July 9, in an editorial, entitled ''Home rule stops at the water's edge,'' said, ''Safe drinking water is not optional in the capital of the most prosperous and powerful nation on the face of the Earth.'' Mr. President, the same thing can be said with reference to safe drinking water all over this country—it should not be optional. ''It is a fundamental element of modern civilization—such a given, in fact, that most Americans don't think twice about it.''

So, without doubt, the condition of the water system in Washington, DC, is an important matter. However, it is time that the citizens of the District and other cities be told about the frightening reality regarding much of our entire Nation's supply of drinking water—the reality that faces much of rural America every day. In my view, safe drinking water should not be optional anywhere in the most prosperous and powerful nation on the face of the Earth.

Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture completed Water 2000, a study of safe drinking water needs in the United States. I hope everyone will take note of the results. Incredibly, in these United States, nearly 3 million families, representing 8 million people, do not have access to safe drinking water. Now, let me repeat that, 8 million people in the United States of America, the greatest country on the face of the Earth, do not have access to a reliable source of clean drinking water. Every day, every night, millions of Americans cannot turn on their faucets and assume that the water is safe to drink. That, in my view, is a national disgrace.

Regrettably, in my own State of West Virginia, the study reports that it would take $162 million to clean up and provide potable water to approximately 79,000 West Virginians. It would take another $405 million to meet the worsening drinking water supply situation of some 476,000 West Virginians. That's nearly half of the population of my State. Nearly half of the people in my state have cause for concern about their water supply. And many other States are facing a similar serious situation.

Sadly, the United States Congress has chosen not to help. During debate on the budget resolution, I made two attempts to restore some of the funding for our national infrastructure that is being carelessly axed at every turn. I offered an amendment that would restore $65 billion to the Federal budget for domestic infrastructure—water and sewer needs, bridges and highways, our national parks, and so forth. Regrettably, this Senate voted 61 to 39 in favor of $65 billion in corporate tax loopholes, rather than for basic infrastructure needs of this Nation. I tried again, offering a second amendment, one that would restore $1.5 billion specifically for Federal water and sewer programs, but this Senate again said no by a vote of 54 to 45. This very Senate said no to a most basic need—clean, drinkable water.

Given the sad outcome of my attempts in the Senate to restore common sense to the budget priorities of this Nation, I am pleased to acknowledge the efforts, which I strongly support, of the Clinton administration to provide safe drinking water to Americans. Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has reallocated $2.8 million for four water supply projects in West Virginia, and $70 million for projects throughout the United States. This is a very small step to be sure, national safe drinking water needs are assessed at some $10 billion.

But, I come to the Senate floor today to congratulate public service districts in four counties of West Virginia for finally securing funds that will help to provide adequate, safe drinking water systems to some of their rural residents in greatest need. I want those families to know that I care, and that I am pleased, very pleased, by the Department's announcement today. To families in West Virginia covered by the following public service districts—Page-Kincaid in Fayette County, Leadsville in Randolph, Downs in Marion, and Red Sulphur in Monroe County—I would like to say that finally there is some relief on the way.

Finally, at least these town residents will enjoy a basic standard of living that people residing in the United States of America ought to be able to expect. Finally, these communities will have the beginnings of an infrastructure which might encourage businesses to locate there. Finally, at least some of the residents in communities in my State will be free to offer a child a sip of water from the tap without fear.

I sometimes seriously wonder about the priorities in this Senate. We often blithely ignore the real-life, day-to-day essential needs of our own citizens. The need for 8 million Americans to confidently use water for drinking, cooking, and recreation ought to be a birthright. There ought never to be any question about government's doing all that it can in the first place, before there is a crisis, to insure that Americans have safe drinking water.

While this announcement is only a small victory for West Virginia and other rural communities across the Nation, I want to recognize this occasion. For those residents within Fayette, Randolph, Marion, and Monroe Counties, this is no doubt a most significant event.

I am also heartened by the increased levels of funding in the 1997 Agriculture appropriations bill, wherein the Senate added $231 million above the House level for rural development grant and loan programs, including water and sewer facilities, bringing the total for rural development programs to $5.7 billion.

All of this will help, but it is high time that Members of this body wake up and focus on the looming water quality crises in this Nation.

This could be your water, coming from your household faucet in your city or your town next month or next year. We cannot ask the American people to put up with this sort of outrage any longer.

DEFICIT REDUCTION

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, let me just take a few minutes of the Senate's time to talk about something that the President of the United States put in the news a bit last night, and then his various Cabinet people today have disseminated across the spectrum, to the media, and to various committees here in the U.S. Congress. It is called the Mid-Session Review of the 1997 Budget. I only hold that up to show you the great lengths the President and the White House are going to to make the case that the deficit reduction that has occurred in the last 3½ years, as if that deficit reduction was attributable to things that the President of the United States had recommend as a matter of policy.

I would like to address that issue today in some detail. It has not been easy to get this point across to those who are observing the fiscal policy of our country. So let me start by saying today there is a new report out. The President's budget office suggests that this year's deficit will be reduced to $117 billion. This is more optimistic than the recent Congressional Budget Office estimate, this $117 billion.

Given that this is an election year, it should come as no surprise that the Clinton administration comes out crowing this morning. But the Clinton forces claiming credit for the deficit reduction that has occurred during the past 3 years is a little like the rooster taking credit for the sunrise.

Do not get me wrong. I am very happy that the deficit has declined these last 3 years. I have spent my Senate career working on various approaches to trying to balance our fiscal books. But I also understand why the deficit has declined. And it is not because of any dramatic action by this