

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent I be able to speak as in morning business.

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

THE INTERMODAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 1997

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I am here this morning on the floor to talk about the very important ISTEA legislation that is being held up in the Senate here for many, many different reasons. But the introduction of the Senate's Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1997 represents the results of intense negotiations between Chairman CHAFEE, Senator WARNER, and Senator BAUCUS, each of whom have represented three different legislative approaches to the reauthorization of ISTEA.

I thank each of these Senators for the work they have done to bring this bill to the floor because the citizens of my home State of Minnesota strongly support a 6-year reauthorization bill, funded at the highest levels. This should be one of our top priorities before we adjourn this session. Unfortunately, however, this very important piece of legislation is being held up by other Senators seeking to impose a political agenda on a very vital transportation spending issue. Again, it is being held up by Senators who want to impose a political agenda on vital transportation spending.

Their effort to halt this crucial transportation spending bill are far more egregious than other attempts in the past to influence legislation by holding it hostage. It is inconceivable to me that we would not consider this bill on its own merits. The question of why not is being asked by every State concerned about the availability of transportation funds for continuing projects. It is ironic that Senators claiming to support labor issues would now thumb their noses at the same hard-working Americans who feed and clothe their families through the salaries they earn working on transportation projects, not to mention how important those projects are for improved safety and for meeting our growing transportation needs.

ISTEA must be considered before we adjourn for the year. There has been a real effort to reach a compromise that achieves balance among the 50 States. This balance is required to address unique transportation needs in the different regions of our country: The congestion needs of the growing South, the aging infrastructure needs of the Northeast, as well as the national transportation needs of the rural West and the Midwest. Almost every State shares in the growth in dollars con-

tained in the bill compared with the funding levels that they received under ISTEA back in 1991.

I was proud to join Senator WARNER as a cosponsor of STEP 21 earlier this year, as Minnesota was a member of the STEP 21 coalition, and I am pleased that much of the bill has been incorporated now into this piece of legislation.

Mr. President, this bill attempts to preserve the principles of ISTEA that have proven to be successful. We need to ensure that our transportation growth contributes to the preservation of our environment.

We need to continue to build upon the shared decisionmaking among the Federal, State, and local governments in the transportation planning process. We also need a transportation bill that is based on a formula that is fair. This bill will either succeed on the doctrine of fairness or it will fall victim to politics as it has in the past.

I am pleased the ISTEA reauthorization attempts to ensure a fair allocation of funds. The new formula was determined with objective factors, such as the number of miles of the National Highway System and each State's contributions to the highway trust fund.

Under this legislation, every State will receive a minimum return of 90 percent of their contributions to the highway trust fund. That is a very different guarantee from the so-called 90-percent minimum allocation in ISTEA. This is a real guarantee.

Finally, we must have a transportation bill that makes an improvement in streamlining as well as flexibility. This bill streamlines ISTEA's five major programs down into three, and they are the National Highway System, the Surface Transportation Program, and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program.

The Federal focus on our most important network of roads, the National Highway System, which includes our interstate system, is maintained. The streamlining and the flexibility provided by the ISTEA reauthorization will give Minnesota the ability to make its own transportation decisions, and that is a great step forward. Other States also would have the same freedom.

This bill attempts to get a reasonable rate of return for Minnesota. In this bill, my State will receive 1.50 percent of Federal apportionment dollars, which represents an increase from the 1.43 percent of actual dollars under the 1991 ISTEA.

The bill would also increase my State's share by over \$82 million per average year above the 1991 authorization level.

I am also pleased to be a cosponsor of the Byrd-Gramm amendment which allows the Federal gas tax of 4.3 cents now dedicated to the highway trust fund to actually be spent on highways. This will provide Minnesota the necessary additional revenue that is so critical to meeting our infrastructure needs.

Mr. President, the political games must end. The reauthorization of ISTEA has expired. We need to go forward and we need to approve a new highway reauthorization bill.

It has been proven again and again that transportation spending is one of the most important, it is one of the most cost-effective investments in our Nation's future. For every \$1 billion spent on transportation, we create 60,000 jobs, jobs that are now at risk again while some Senators attempt to hold this legislation prisoner in exchange for the advancement of their particular political agendas. I ask my colleagues this morning to help liberate this political hostage to allow the ISTEA legislation to proceed.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor, and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Thank you, Mr. President.

REVENUE SHARING OF OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF FEDERAL RECEIPTS FROM OIL AND GAS PRODUCTION

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today to bring to the attention of the Senate and, hopefully, to the Nation, a concern that is very important to my constituents in the State of Louisiana and to other coastal States. I rise to address this issue in order to begin what I hope will be an educational process for all of us.

As you know, the Federal Government, through the Minerals Management Service and the Bureau of Land Management at the Department of the Interior shares with the States 50 percent of the mineral revenues from Federal lands inside the boundary of States, to offset the impacts of onshore mineral development. Unlike the States that support onshore development of Federal mineral resources, Louisiana, particularly, and Texas, Alaska, California, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida receive comparatively little of the revenues received by the Federal Government for offshore oil and gas development on the Outer Continental Shelf.

I intend very shortly to introduce legislation to realign the OCS revenues to reflect a more fair and more just allocation. This legislation will also address historical and anticipated impacts on infrastructure and environmental needs that have been identified over the course of time. I raise this issue as the Senate today, Mr. President, will be voting on the Interior and related agencies appropriations conference report this afternoon. That bill