

amount of existing sanctions law. The fact that the resolution was adopted by unanimous consent in the Senate and passed by an overwhelming vote of 414 to 8 in the House of Representatives sends a clear signal to Russia and the administration that this dangerous trade must stop now.

I am very pleased that from its inception, this resolution has enjoyed bipartisan support; 39 Senators, from both sides of the aisle, cosponsored the measure and I want to thank them for their support and also thank Representative JANE HARMAN who was the principal sponsor of the resolution in the House of Representatives and worked tirelessly on its behalf. It has been a pleasure working with Representative HARMAN over the past few months and I look forward to continuing to work closely with her to address the national security challenges facing our Nation.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the quorum call is rescinded.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the Senate stands in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Thereupon, at 7:43 p.m., the Senate recessed subject to the call of the Chair.

The Senate reassembled at 8:23 p.m., when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ROBERTS).

Mr. CHAFEE addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION EXTENSION ACT OF 1997

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. 1454, introduced earlier today by Senator BOND, and others.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1454) to provide a 6-month extension of highway, highway safety, and transit programs pending enactment of a law reauthorizing the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I want to say how much I appreciate the wonderful work on this legislation by Senator BOND, Senator WARNER, Senator BAUCUS, and others. I am pleased to joint them in cosponsoring the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 1997.

Seven weeks ago, the Committee on Environment and Public Works unanimously reported out S. 1173, better known as ISTE A II. I am proud of the committee's efforts to come to an agreement on a very difficult piece of legislation. We filed the report at the end of September, and we were prepared to complete action on the bill before the end of the calendar year. Regrettably, a number of unrelated events having nothing to do with ISTE A have prevented us from completing work this year on a 6-year reauthorization bill.

As the prospects have dimmed for the enactment of a 6-year bill this year, it is clear that we cannot go home before taking care of a number of concerns. This past Tuesday, November 4, the Committee on Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing on which many of these concerns were brought to light. First of all, if Congress does nothing, a number of States will be hard-pressed to survive through the spring on their existing unobligated balances. Second, States are restricted in using their unobligated balances across Federal-aid highway, transit, and safety categories. Third, a number of Federal transportation safety programs, as well as the Federal transit program, have no funds to carry over into this fiscal year. Finally, without any relief, the Federal Highway Administration will be forced to shut down in January, which could result in 3,600 employees being furloughed.

Despite the gloomy reports of what could happen if Congress fails to act, there is a solution. Senators BOND, WARNER, BAUCUS, and I have a measure that addresses the needs of the States, the safety programs, the Federal-aid highway program, and transit. First of all, the bill before us will keep the nation's transportation system up and running until we enact the long-term reauthorization bill. It gives States the flexibility they need to continue transportation planning and construction activities. Each State is guaranteed at least 50 percent of the previous year's spending limitation to spend on any transportation project or program. To keep the States on equal footing, however, no state may spend more than 75 percent of its 1997 spending limitation.

Second, the bill provides states with flexibility to spend their unobligated balances on any highway, safety, or transit program category. To prevent important environmental programs such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program [CMAQ] from being unfairly disadvantaged, however, the Secretary of Transportation would restore the transferred funds back to these programs when the new reauthorization bill is enacted.

Third, the bill provides funding for key ISTE A safety and transit programs. The Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program, the State and Community Safety Grant Program, the Na-

tional Driver Register, Operation Lifesaver, and the Alcohol-impaired Driving Countermeasures Program, will continue to run. Also, the Federal transit discretionary and formula programs will receive the funds they need. Fourth, the bill provides funds for the Federal Highway Administration to continue operating and assisting the States with their transportation programs.

Before closing, let me comment on what the bill before us does not do. Unlike the 6-month extension bill that was approved by the House earlier this month, this bill does not provide States with contract authority for 1 year's worth of highway construction. Our bill gives the States until May 1 of next year to obligate the funds provided in this bill. The trouble with including funds that will not run out until next November is that there will be no pressure to enact permanent ISTE A legislation until that time, right before the 1998 elections. Pushing the decision off until next fall runs the risk of our being without a bill 1 year from now. Moreover, this measure avoids the contentious fight we would have over apportionment formulas and funding categories if we were to take up the House bill.

The bill before us is by no means perfect, but it is the optimal approach to the situation. Our hopes for an ideal outcome were dashed when we were unable to complete work on a 6-year reauthorization bill. This measure keeps the State and Federal transportation programs running, it ensures that no highway contractors are put out of work, and it continues funding for vital safety and transit programs. Most important, it will keep the momentum going to enact a 6-year bill early next year. And it does all of this without a battle over the formulas.

Again, I want to commend Senator BOND for his determination in moving this measure forward. I also want to thank Senators WARNER and BAUCUS for their excellent work. I urge all of my colleagues to join us in supporting this important measure.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I appreciate the hard work done by the Environment and Public Works Committee, and the compromise it represents. However, I believe the proposal sent over by the House in H.R. 2516 represented a superior short-term reauthorization proposal. Hopefully, many of these funding elements may find their way into the final ISTE A reauthorization proposal.

Mr. President, I would simply like to gain assurance from the chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee that passage of his short-term proposal in no way obligates the Senate or its Members to support of any specific funding level or formula, and that it is simply a stop-gap measure until we can proceed to a final long-term authorization bill.

Mr. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I can definitely assure the Senator from