(section 101(g) for the Steel Loan Guarantee Program and section 201 (f) for the Oil and Gas Loan Guarantee Program). Ordinarily, the applicant for a loan guarantee is the prospective lender. Am I correct in assuming that that would be the case under these programs, and that the true intent of the language in the legislation is that the prospective lender is the applicant?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, the Senator from New Mexico is correct in that assumption. It will be the lender that obtains the direct benefits of a loan guarantee, and it is the prospective lender that will be required to submit necessary application materials for the guaranty. The prospective borrower will, of course, also have to submit information and other material as part of the application for a loan guarantee, but under each program it is the lender with whom the Loan Guarantee Board will have its legal relationship. Therefore, it is the prospective lender that will be required to apply for assistance under these programs.

Mr. DOMENICI. It is possible that under each of these programs there may be many, many eligible firms—more under the Oil and Gas Loan Guarantee Program, but potentially a high number under the Steel Loan Guarantee Program, as well—particularly as there is no ''floor'' or minimum amount of loan that may be guaranteed. Would the Loan Guarantee Boards have the discretion to establish priorities and criteria for the consideration of applications and award of guarantees, so that projects could be considered in an orderly manner, and there could be a proper mix of loan risks, to maximize the effectiveness of the programs within the amount appropriated for program costs?

Mr. BYRD. The Loan Guarantee Boards would absolutely have that discretion. The clear intent of this legislation is to effectuate the guarantee of up to $1.5 billion of loans under the two programs. There is no requirement for first-come, first-served among applicants. The Boards may impose additional reasonable requirements for participation in the programs. It is, indeed, our intent to look to the judgment and expertise of the administering agencies, the experience and competence of professional advisors, and the wisdom and common sense of the Loan Guarantee Boards themselves to make these programs run effectively. It is not our intent to hamstring the Boards in determining their priorities and procedures; rather, we expect the Boards to implement these programs as to ensure the fulfillment of the Congressional purpose.

Mr. DOMENICI. I note that the legislation requires the Loan Guarantee Boards to establish procedures, rules and regulations, but appropriates money to the Department of Commerce to administer the programs. Am I correct in assuming that this is because the Boards themselves are not expected to actually administer the programs, but only to adopt rules and procedures, and approve guarantees and amendments? And am I correct in further assuming that, subject to the direction of the Loan Guarantee Boards, the Department of Commerce is expected to prepare proposed rules and procedures for the Boards' consideration; on behalf of the Boards, publish regulations in the Federal Register; process applications for guarantees; and undertake the day-to-day administration of the programs?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, those are correct assumptions. While the Boards will have the ultimate decision-making responsibilities, and will take the actions directed by the legislation, as a practical matter they are not expected to handle the day-to-day work of administering loan guarantee programs. That will be handled through the Department of Commerce, using its own staff, contracting for the consultants and other services, or through agreements with another agency or agencies.

Mr. DOMENICI. Many qualified steel companies are currently in bankruptcy, or have existing debt with covenants in those investments that provide for seniority for such existing debentures. In determining loan security, is it not the intent of this legislation to give the Board the discretion to use its professional judgment to determine the nature, kind, quality and amount of security required for a loan guarantee?

Mr. BYRD. That is correct. The Board has the flexibility to use a combination of factors, including prospective earning power, in determining loan security terms and conditions.

Mr. DOMENICI. I note that the legislation in section 101 (j), appropriates $5 million to the Department of Commerce, for necessary expenses to administer the Steel Loan Guarantee Program. Similarly, in section 201 (i), $2.5 million is appropriated to the Department for necessary expenses to administer the Oil and Gas Loan Guarantee Program. In each case, the legislation provides that the appropriation, ''may be transferred to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Trade Development of the International Trade Administration.'' The operative word here is ''may.'' Do I correctly assume that the Secretary of Commerce has the discretion to determine where funds provided for under these programs can be most effectively administered?

Mr. BYRD. That is an accurate assumption. The Secretary is authorized under the legislation to assign administration of the programs as he sees fit, to accomplish their effective administration.

Mr. DOMENICI. I ask whether the full faith and credit of the United States will stand behind the guarantees to be executed by the Loan Guarantee Boards. This is of course an important matter for prospective lenders, determining perhaps at what interest rates a guaranteed loan would be made, or indeed whether a loan would be made at all. Am I correct in my assumption that although the bill does not specifically say so in so many words, the full faith and credit of the United States will in fact stand behind the loan guarantees?

Mr. BYRD. My good friend from New Mexico is correct. Under this legislation, the full faith and credit of the United States will, in fact, stand behind each loan guarantee executed by the Loan Guarantee Board, the same as if the legislation specifically said so. Lenders may participate in this program with confidence, and should therefore offer the borrowers the very best terms—including low interest—on the guaranteed loans.

Mr. DOMENICI. This is indeed important legislation, but I ask whether regulations promulgated to implement the legislation would be a ''major rule'' as that term is used in the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 804). Generally, any rule that has a $100 million effect on the economy in a single year is considered to be a major rule, and cannot go into effect until 60 days after the rule is submitted to Congress for review and possible disapproval. But, if the loan guarantee regulations are considered a major rule, delaying their effect would appear to be inconsistent with the language and intent of the legislation. Once regulations promulgated under this legislation are written, cleared by OMB, filed with Congress, and published in the Federal Register, I assume they would go into effect right away. Is this correct?

Mr. BYRD. Yes, that assumption is accurate. Any rule issued to implement this program could be considered a ''major rule'' under the Congressional Review Act, and subject to the delayed effective date. However, the legislation itself recognizes the urgency of the programs: section 101(l) provides that the Steel Loan Guarantee Board ''shall issue such final procedures, rules, and regulations as may be necessary to carry out this section not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act.'' Identical language appears for the Oil and Gas Loan Guarantee Board, in section 201(k). Due to this urgency, we expect the Administration to apply the provisions of the Congressional Review Act which allow even a major rule to go into effect without delay, consistent with the public interest.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DARLINGTON MOTOR SPEEDWAY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, nestled in the flat, hot tobacco country of South Carolina's Pee Dee region is an egg-shaped track that is one of the most revered spots in all of auto racing, the ''Darlington Raceway''. As anyone even remotely familiar with NASCAR can tell you, for 50 years this September, the Darlington Raceway has not only been home to the most exciting race in motor sports, the

''Southern 500'', it has also earned the ominous and accurate nickname as the track ''too tough to tame''.

For five decades, people from around the world have traveled to this otherwise quiet city in order to be spectators in this contest of driving and mechanical skill. The atmosphere is festive, with the infield and stands packed to capacity with racing enthusiasts who are willing to brave the cruel heat, stifling humidity, and unforgiving sun in order to see which driver is able to prove that his mettle is equal to the asphalt and curves that make-up this 1.36 mile track. In 1950, the year of the first race, 25,000 people turned out as spectators, this year, there will be more than 100,000 race fans at Darlington, and millions more around the globe will follow the action on radio or television. That is a testament to both the popularity of NASCAR and the respect that the Darlington Raceway has among drivers and race fans.

To those who have never made it to Darlington, it might be hard to understand the attraction of this sport, but for those of us who have witnessed this race up close, there is no question why people love to go to this track. There is something truly awe inspiring about standing close to one of the turns at Darlington and watching stock cars engineered and built to the ultimate standards roll past as they race to be the first to finish the 500 grueling miles that must be completed in order to win the ''Southern 500''. These cars rumble past at well over 100 miles-per-hour with only inches between bumpers, and as they go through one of the four turns of the track, the earth literally shakes under one's feet and the air is thick with the deafening roar of engines and the fumes of high performance fuel. It takes individuals of tremendous mechanical skill to put one of these vehicles on the track, and other men of incredible determination, skill, and grit to compete in these races. One cannot help but come away amazed at the abilities of these drivers and crews, or at the challenge the Darlington Raceway presents to these individuals.

In 1950, I was serving in my final year as Governor of the State of South Carolina, and on September 1st of that year, I had the distinct honor and privilege of cutting the ribbon that opened the Darlington Motor Speedway. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be able to celebrate the golden anniversary of the opening of the Speedway in person, but regrettably my schedule does not permit me to be in Darlington early next month. Instead, I have chosen to take to the Senate Floor to salute the vision of Harold Brasington, the man who built the Darlington Speedway. I also want to salute Jim Hunter, President of Darlington Raceway; Bill France, Jr., the President and CEO of International Speedway Corporation, as well as the President of NASCAR; and most importantly, to express my greetings and well wishes to all the drivers, crews, and fans who will descend there on September 5, 1999 to see who will tame this track.

THE FEDERAL RESEARCH INVESTMENT ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to express my strong support for S. 296, the Federal Research Investment Act, which was introduced earlier this year by Senator FRIST and Senator ROCKEFELLER, and was reported favorably by the Commerce Committee earlier this month. This legislation is important for the future of the nation's economy and our competitive position in the global market-place.

A key ingredient in the continued success and growth of our economy is federal investment in research and development. Much of America's technological leadership today and in the past has been stimulated by federal R&D expenditures, and we need to continue to strengthen these investments as a top national priority.

The results of this public-private partnership are all around us. They include the biotechnology industry, commercial satellite communications, integrated circuitry, the Internet, satellite-based global navigation and communications, and supercomputers.

The Act calls for doubling the federal non-defense science budgets over the next eleven years. As a share of GDP, federal investment in R&D now stands at about half what it was 30 years ago. This share is projected to continue to fall under the current budget caps. Clearly, a strong commitment is needed for investment in R&D funding for basic sciences. Without a strong commitment, the worsening imbalance in R&D funding will have a negative impact on the economy and the nation's competitive position.

I strongly support the effort to double the federal R&D budget. It is one of the most effective ways to ensure the continued prosperity of our nation. It is imperative that we continue making these investments which have made Massachusetts and many other states renowned for their innovative leadership. We must continue and enhance, not cut back, on these needed investments.

I commend Senator ROCKEFELLER and Senator FRIST for their leadership and vision on this critical piece of legislation, and I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this important Act.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I would like to join Senators FRIST and LIEBERMAN and other distinguished colleagues to commend the Senate for passing the Federal Research Investment Act. This legislation will set a long-term vision for federal funding of research and development programs so that the United States can continue to be the world leader in the research and innovation upon which our high-tech industry is based.

One only needs to look as far as the front page of the newspaper to see the effect of high-technology on our country. New drugs are becoming available for fighting cancer; new communication hardware is allowing more people to connect to the Internet; and advances in fuel-cell technology are leading to low-emission, high-efficiency alternative fuel vehicles. According to a 1998 National Science Foundation study, over seventy percent of all patent applications in America cite non-profit or federally funded research as a core component to the innovation being patented. Even at IBM, an industry leader in R&D, only 21 percent of its patent applications were based on company research. People are living longer, with a higher quality of life, in a better economy due to processes, procedures, and equipment which are based on federally funded research.

New technologies and products do not appear out of thin air. They are the result of a basis of knowledge which has been built up by researchers supported by federal funding. American companies draw from this knowledge base in developing the high-tech products which you and I read about in the paper and see on our store shelves everyday.

I view this knowledge base as an investment. The US government puts in modest amounts of funding in the form of support for scientific research. The dividends come from the economic growth which is produced as this knowledge is turned into actual products by American companies.

A large part of the current rosy economic situation is due to these high-tech industries. High-tech companies are responsible for one-third of our economic output and half of our economic growth. Alan Greenspan has said that new technologies are primarily responsible for the nation's phenomenal economic performance, low unemployment, low inflation, high corporate profits and soaring stock prices. If we want continued economic growth, we therefore need to support the fundamental, pre-competitive research critical to these industries, at the necessary levels, and in a stable manner from year to year—and we need to do so now.

Just three years ago, federal science funding was in a serious decline and fewer than half a dozen members of Congress gave it any attention. Now the connection between a healthy research enterprise and our nation's strong economic growth is widely understood. In the last two years the science budget has increased above inflation. In particular, for Fiscal Year 1999, an unprecedented 10 percent increase in civilian R&D funding was appropriated. Yet, somehow we appear to be once again in a situation where the future outlook for R&D funding is either declining, stagnating, or barely keeping pace with inflation. We must not only pass the Federal Research Investment Act, but we must continue