

dollars and sixty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, in his capacity as Senator from Wyoming, asks that the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, at 12:29 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:15 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1998

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume consideration of S. 1048, the Department of Transportation appropriations bill, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1048) making appropriations for the Department of Transportation and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1998, and for other purposes.

The Senate resumed consideration of the bill.

Pending:

Shelby (for D'Amato-Moynihan) amendment No. 1022, to direct a transit fare study in the New York City metropolitan area.

AMENDMENT NO. 1022

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pending is amendment No. 1022 to the bill offered by Senator SHELBY on behalf of Senator D'AMATO.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SHELBY. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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. SHELBY. Mr. President, what is the pending business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is amendment No. 1022, offered by the Senator from Alabama on behalf of the Senator from New York, Senator D'AMATO, to bill number S. 1048.

Mr. SHELBY. I ask unanimous consent that we temporarily set that amendment aside.

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

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, we are now resuming consideration of the fiscal year 1998 Transportation appropria-

tions bill under a unanimous-consent agreement reached last evening. I believe this is important legislation that will have very significant effects on every State in this Union. It sets a record-high obligation ceiling on Federal highway spending. It provides the resources for the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard to operate our Nation's airways and waterways safely and efficiently.

Mr. President, it increases, again, our commitment to improving highway safety in this Nation. We want to finish our deliberations on this bill and pass it, if we can, and I ask now for the cooperation of all my colleagues in the Senate who have the option to offer amendments under the consent agreement and have not yet brought them to our attention. I would like for them to come to the floor with their amendments.

Later, I intend to seek a unanimous-consent agreement that all amendments must be offered this evening, that we debate any amendments on which there is disagreement this evening, and that we have a final vote tomorrow. Accordingly, I encourage all Members desiring to speak on the bill on any of the amendments that they propose to come to the floor as soon as possible.

Further, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments—we have a list of amendments and some of them we have worked out and will be stricken. If I could, I would like to go through the list of the ones that we worked on and we will not have to consider. First is the Hollings amendment on the list; the Graham transit amendment; the Durbin amendment; two amendments by Senator ENZI; the Mack amendment; one of the Abraham amendments; the Bond amendment—two of the Bond amendments. I believe that would take care of a number of them. Some of the other amendments still will be before us, we hope, in some form soon or will be disposed of in some way.

Mr. BYRD addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, this has been cleared on this side. Therefore, we have no objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. No objection is heard to the agreement.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of S. 1048, the Transportation appropriations bill for fiscal year 1998.

The Transportation appropriations bill may be the most important of all the appropriations bills. It establishes the Federal investment level in our Nation's highways, airports, passenger, rail, and mass transit systems. I have spoken many times on the Senate floor regarding the importance of maintaining and improving the Nation's physical infrastructure. Our economy is highly dependent on the efficient movement of goods and people. Conges-

tion and capacity constraints on our Nation's highways and delays at our airports cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars each year in lost productivity. But while the estimated costs associated with congestion grow each year, our Federal investment in infrastructure has continued to decline significantly.

Indeed, since 1980, our national investment in infrastructure has declined, both as a percentage of our gross domestic product and as a percentage of our Federal budget. The bill before the Senate today seeks to reverse the destructive trend of Federal disinvestment. Most importantly, as far as this Senator is concerned, the Federal aid highway obligation ceiling will rise to a historic high of \$21.8 billion, an increase of more than \$3 billion, or 17 percent. Our Nation's airports will enjoy a 16-percent increase in Federal funding for critical capital and safety improvement projects, an increase of \$260 million.

Now, Mr. President, these additional highway funds are sorely needed in all States of the Nation. Indeed, the historic \$3 billion increase is still only one-fifth the size of the increase that the Federal Highway Administration estimates would be necessary to cease deterioration in the condition of our National Highway System. Put another way, if we wanted to see a net improvement in the condition of our roads and bridges, we would be required to provide an increase in excess of \$15 billion in the bill, or a total of almost \$37 billion. Unfortunately, the restrictions that have been placed on domestic discretionary spending through the Federal budget process preclude us from providing such an increase through this bill. But I still want to commend the managers for making our Federal investment in highways a priority in the development of this bill.

These highway funds are not the only critical investments in this bill. The Transportation appropriations bill includes our entire annual investment in critical safety programs in all modes of transportation. These include investments to maintain and modernize our air traffic control system, programs for the prevention of drunk driving, funding for rail safety inspectors and motor carrier inspectors, as well as programs of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board.

Mr. President, when one considers the costs to society in terms of the thousands of lives lost each year through accidents involving our transportation system, the devastation is great. Whether it be highway deaths, or airline disasters, or train accidents, it matters little to those who lose their lives, or to those who are permanently disabled, or to their families, as to which mode of transportation was involved. We simply must do all that we can to reduce the death and the destruction that occurs annually in our various transportation systems.