

SPECTER, for the support he has given IDeA thus far, but I believe we can and should do more next year.

Mr. President, I would ask the Minority Leader, Senator DASCHLE, if he would like to add anything to what I have said.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I thank the Majority Leader for his comments, and I share the Senator's concern about the concentration of NIH funds. I, too, ask if next year we can't find more than \$10 million for this program—\$10 million that will be split among researchers in 24 states.

I would also like to explain briefly why I believe IDeA ought to be funded at a much higher level. Mr. President, IDeA funds only merit-based, peer reviewed research that meets NIH research objectives. Let me state that another way: IDeA funds only good science, and it is in no way an earmarked program specific to a specific disease or disease-related issue. Researchers from the 24 IDeA states can submit proposals to any one of a number of existing NIH funding mechanisms, and those proposals are then peer-reviewed and funding decisions are made based on merit.

Mr. President, I think the statistics the Majority Leader mentioned regarding the extreme geographic concentration of NIH research funds are eye-opening. I think many members of the Senate would be surprised to learn that nearly one-half of NIH extramural funds go to just five states, and that 24 IDeA states combined received just over 5% of NIH extramural funding in FY95. In fact, the Majority leader and I were joined by 24 of our colleagues in the Senate in sending a letter to the Subcommittee Chairman, Senator SPECTER, supporting \$100 million for IDeA in FY99.

To put that request in perspective, Mr. President, the final FY99 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education appropriation before us increases NIH funding by \$2 billion. In other words, a \$100 million IDeA program would have designated five percent of one year's increase for this program which funds competitive, peer-reviewed research in 24 states. The conferees did include \$10 million for IDeA—an increase from the FY98 funding level of \$5 million—and I thank Senator SPECTER for his support. Because this program is so important, I will continue to encourage the Chairman to increase IDeA funding next year and in the years that follow.

Mr. LOTT. I thank the Minority Leader for his remarks, and I look forward continuing to work with him to significantly increase IDeA funding next year.

#### THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION REFORM ACT

Mr. STEVENS. I would like to ask the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Environment and Public Works a question regarding S.

2364, the Economic Development Administration Reform Act, which passed the Senate on Monday. As they are aware, the State of Alaska, while rich in resources, also has communities that suffer serious economic distress. EDA assistance can make a difference to many of these communities. Thus I am pleased to support the efforts of my friends to reauthorize this important agency; and indeed, I am a cosponsor of this bill.

Let me ask specifically about an issue that is very important to Alaskans, especially those in Southeast Alaska. Under this bill, EDA programs are available to aid distressed communities with both public works and economic adjustment assistance. In Southeast Alaska, many communities have faced economic adjustment problems, such as high unemployment, as a result of Federal regulatory changes with regard to timber harvests. If these communities meet the definition of "distressed" as outlined in the bill, would a situation such as theirs qualify as eligible for EDA assistance?

Mr. CHAFEE. Yes, we expect it would. The situation the Senator describes is exactly the type of situation that we would expect could be addressed by EDA. In fact, I would direct the senator's attention to the bill's new Section 2(a)(1), which specifically references areas that are affected by Federal actions. The language notes as possible distressed areas those that suffer dislocation as a result of "certain Federal actions (including environmental requirements that result in the removal of economic activities from a locality)."

Mr. BAUCUS. I agree. In fact, many areas of the country, including Montana, face similar situations. We included that phrase intentionally to ensure that such distress may be addressed by EDA programs. It is our view, and it is a view shared by EDA officials, that such communities should be eligible to apply for EDA aid.

Mr. STEVENS. With regard to the criteria used to determine eligibility, Section 301(a)(3) refers to communities that experience special needs arising from severe unemployment or economic adjustment problems resulting from changes in economic conditions. Could my colleagues tell me whether EDA has flexibility in applying this criterion to areas—such as these timber-affected Alaskan communities—that are requesting EDA assistance?

Mr. CHAFEE. Section 301(a) sets the basic eligibility requirements for economically distressed areas. These criteria are intended to ensure that EDA assistance is targeted to truly distressed communities. The third criterion, which you mention, is intended to allow the necessary flexibility to address other situations of serious distress that, for a number of reasons, may not fulfill the first two criteria but that clearly would be considered by the Secretary and Congress as deserving of assistance. Thus, the bill before

us provides the Secretary with sufficient flexibility in this regard.

Mr. BAUCUS. Again, I agree. We recognized that flexibility is required to ensure that EDA may address the varied causes and types of economic distress nationwide. Therefore, in his efforts to ensure that EDA assistance go to the communities of greatest distress, the Secretary is allowed some flexibility in making determinations for awards of assistance under this Act.

Mr. STEVENS. I thank my colleagues for making these important clarifications.

#### LINDA MORGAN AND THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Mr. FORD. Mr. President, in the closing days of the 105th Congress, it appears that S. 1802, a bill to reauthorize the Surface Transportation Board, may not be enacted into law. I hope that the STB is not penalized in any way for the failure of Congress to enact S. 1802. In fact, I want my colleagues to know that Linda Morgan, the current chairman of the STB, is well respected within the Senate on both sides of the aisle. She was a valued member of the staff of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation for several years. The work ethic, honesty and balance that she demonstrated as a member of the Committee's professional staff have been evidenced also at the STB.

Linda Morgan and her staff have handled a significant number of complex matters in a timely, thorough manner despite very limited resources. Just one example of the Board's evenhanded approach is the exhaustive review of the acquisition of Conrail by CSX and Norfolk Southern. This transaction will yield significant competitive and environmental benefits, not only in Kentucky but throughout the Eastern United States. The Board's evenhanded, professional approach in reviewing this major transaction and assessing the public benefits is indicative of the excellent work that Chairman Morgan and the Board have done since its creation.

As a result, I support S. 1802 and hope that the bill could still become law before the conclusion of the 105th Congress. Also, I urge the Administration to renominate Ms. Morgan for an additional term as Chairman of the STB. She is a proven, well-qualified public servant, and she has earned the opportunity to complete the work that she has started.

#### PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE SENATE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today, an enhanced Virtual Tour of the United States was published on the U.S. Senate web server. This enhanced tour uses state-of-the-art technology to combine high quality graphics with still pictures to provide information about historical events, rooms, and works of art in the Senate.