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Committee on Environment  
and Public Works Washington, D.C.

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S. 1647, DEVELOPING A RELIABLE AND INNOVATIVE VISION FOR THE  
ECONOMY ACT

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2015

U.S. SENATE

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:34 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Building, the Honorable James Inhofe [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Inhofe, Boxer, Vitter, Barrasso, Capito, Crapo, Boozman, Sessions, Wicker, Fischer, Rounds, Sullivan, Carper, Cardin, Sanders, Whitehouse, Merkley, Gillibrand, Booker and Markey.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES INHOFE, A UNITED STATES SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Senator Inhofe. Our meeting will come to order.

Welcome to today's markup. It has been a long time and we have talked about it. We have been down this road before and now it is a reality today.

As I have said many times, my top priority this year is to pass a fiscally-responsible, long term highway bill. Ranking Member Boxer, Senator Vitter, Senator Carper and I have worked hard to put this together. I think they agree also.

People ask questions. What are you trying to accomplish? We want a long term bill. We have gone through the agony of short term extensions and we do not have to do that again. For the sake of America, we should not do that again. That is too expensive.

Unfortunately, what used to be the best transportation system in the world is now deteriorating. Senator Boxer made some comments about her observations in China and some of the things that are going on. We are just not in the position we were at one time.

American businesses rely on an efficient and reliable transportation network. More than 250 million vehicles traverse the highway system each year and businesses require a reliable transportation network to operate. However, every day, 20,000

miles of our highways slow below posted speed limits or experience stop-and-go conditions. This type of congestion has a huge negative impact on America's businesses.

The DRIVE Act has several key components that position America's transportation system to support our growing economy. This bill defines the federal role to prioritize projects that are most in the national interest. This bill creates a new freight program that gives American businesses increased access to energy production, agriculture, mining and the ports where we trade with the rest of the world.

In order to implement these reforms, we are cutting red tape to accelerate project delivery. This is something we have successfully done on two other occasions.

We are carrying that forward again today. This is accomplished by improving collaboration, eliminating redundancies, and removing barriers that delay the process. We are making the NEPA process more efficient so projects can be delivered in a timely fashion.

A solution is urgent, because today we quite literally sit at a crossroads. In order to repair deficient bridges, eliminate waste, and reduce congestion, Congress must act now and pass a long-term bill, the bill we have before us today.

Senator Boxer?

[The prepared statement of Senator Inhofe follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BARBARA BOXER, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Senator Boxer. Mr. Chairman, this is what I call a really good day in this committee. I hope it starts a trend in the Senate.

My Chairman, Senator Jim Inhofe, and I have negotiated, along with Senators Vitter and Carper, and, I have to say, every member on our side and every member on his side, a strong, six-year surface transportation bill, which we are calling the DRIVE Act.

This bill comes not a minute too soon, because we are 38 days away from the expiration of the current highway program extension. Shortly after that, the Highway Trust Fund, which funds highways and transit, will go broke.

We have 61,300 structurally-deficient bridges in the U.S., and 50 percent of our roads are in less than good condition. That is unacceptable. Our transportation systems used to be the envy of the world, as my colleague pointed out, but now we lag behind.

States and local governments rely on the Federal Government to fund parts of their surface transportation programs. Some States depend on federal resources for 60, 70, 80, 90 and even 100 percent. Millions of American workers and thousands of businesses are relying on us to pass this transportation bill.

I will go through the highlights for me.

One is increased funding above current levels, which will begin to help us address the nation's massive backlog. Second is a national freight program, which will dedicate billions of dollars per year to improving goods movement. It costs businesses a fortune when they cannot move their goods in a timely way.

Third is projects of national significance, which will target funds to the most deserving mega-projects in the Country. Fourth is funding for transportation alternatives, to continue investing in active transportation projects that provide cost-effective transportation alternatives while also improving safety, protecting public health, and reducing congestion.

Fifth is a program about which I care deeply, a robust TIFIA program that meets the current needs. I would remind colleagues that every dollar of TIFIA funding is matched by 30 or more dollars from private sector and government sources.

Sixth is a new reform which was actually cheered by my colleagues when I explained it to them. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for working so hard on this. This is a new reform that allows local sponsors to get funding for their local projects directly rather than having to go to the States and the State takes off an amount of money for administration.

When we cooperate and really negotiate, everybody has to

give up a little. During the negotiations of this bill, in order to get the things I just highlighted, there were things I had to agree to that were painful for me such as accelerating project delivery.

However, I want to make it clear that the provisions I worked on with Senator Inhofe do not undermine current environmental health and safety laws. They just speed things up so that we can get the job done.

I have been clear from the start that the Democratic Conference would like to see an even more robust transportation bill given the needs we have. President Obama has introduced his idea. I think he calls it the GROW Act.

We will continue on our side to fight for a more robust bill. We believe it is incredible that we have been able to come together to get this bill done. We are proud of it and we are proud of our staffs across the aisle.

I do want to say to my Chairman, this was really a moment for us again. We came close to losing the whole thing over the weekend but we never gave up and we found the compromise we needed.

I want to add something here that I think is important. Yesterday, by chance, I had the opportunity to talk to Speaker Boehner, who I just ran into in the hallway. He called me and he wanted to talk about this transportation bill.

Mr. Chairman and members, he told me he strongly supports a six-year bill and that he is going to work hard to get it there. When I told him of our bipartisan agreement, Mr. Chairman, he could not have been more pleased.

This is really good to have the leaders in the House, I know the Democrats feel the same way, if we can all work together.

Yesterday in the House, a TSCA bill passed 398 to 1, what an amazing, remarkable thing, to take a bill that was so controversial and get it to a place where it could have that kind of vote. I hope we can follow the lead on that.

I thank you so very much.

[The prepared statement of Senator Boxer follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Boxer.

As a reminder, I think we are all aware that in order to pass the legislation, we have to have a quorum of 11 but just 7 to approve amendments. Right now, we are at 13, nobody leave.

We will begin considering the text circulated with the notice provided to all offices as usual. I will ask if members seek recognition on each amendment and allow each member to call up their own amendments.

We can have committee counsel available, which they are available and seated now at the table to answer questions concerning the legislation and the amendments from the committee members. At the conclusion of the member statements and questions, we will vote on the amendments and proceed to a vote on S. 1647.

To begin, the Ranking Member, Senator Vitter, Senator Carper and I have developed a list of amendments that can be agreed to. I would ask that the following amendments be adopted en bloc.

Fischer No. 1 is modified. Gillibrand-Merkley No. 1 is modified. Whitehouse No. 2 is modified. Wicker-Booker No. 2 is modified. These amendments and modifications were stipulated last night and there is no objection.

Is there objection? Without objection, so ordered.

We will now proceed to amendments. Does any Senator seek

recognition concerning the bill or to offer amendments? Senator  
Whitehouse.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Senator Whitehouse. First, let me thank you, Chairman, the Ranking Member and our two subcommittee Chairs and Ranking Members for the work you have done to bring us to this point.

We have an increase, not as much as many of us would like to see, but an increase nevertheless. We have a long-term bill which we fought very hard for and which we have tried to encourage our colleagues to adopt before.

I appreciate very much my measure related to composite technologies has been included by agreement. Thank you for that.

I would like to bring to everyone's attention a piece that was left out. I will not call it for a vote here. I will continue to work to try to get it into the bill.

We had a hearing in the Budget Committee just last week. There is a new CBO chief who has been selected by the Republican Majority, who has very good Republican credentials.

In his testimony, he volunteered that we needed to be prepared to address the climate change-related problem of storms and sea level rise on our coasts. This is the Republican CBO person volunteering that into his pre-filed testimony before the Budget Committee.

I hope we can begin to take seriously what is happening

along our coastlines. If you go to the tide gauge outside Naval Station Newport, it is up 10 inches. That means that coastal roads around this Country face new and different threats than they did when they were built.

I hope that those of us from coastal States can join together to try to seek a program that will help the particular threat that coastal roads and infrastructure face as sea levels rise and as the storms that batter them against our coasts increase in power.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on that, but I will close where I began which is with my appreciation to the Chairman and the Ranking Member for pulling this together on what I think is a very important and consequential piece of legislation.

[The prepared statement of Senator Whitehouse follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse.

Let me assure you that our debate will go on in the future on this issue.

Senator Whitehouse. I have no doubt about that, Mr. Chairman.

Are there others wishing to be heard?

Senator Wicker. Could I be heard on what Senator Whitehouse just said?

Senator Inhofe. Senator Wicker.

Senator Wicker. I think this is a very sensible approach. Certainly Senator Whitehouse and I have had spirited exchanges about the cause of certain things that are going on in the environment.

It seems to me that if you have a 10-inch rise in sea level and more water pounding against the roadway, the sensible thing to do is exactly what Senator Whitehouse said, make your roadway a little higher and compensate for that perhaps with a seawall or something like that.

I think we are a lot more likely as humankind, Mr. Chairman, to be able to do that sort of thing than to think about taking action that can actually lower the level of sea level in that area.

Thank you very much. It is something that Senator Whitehouse and I can agree on.

Senator Whitehouse. I appreciate Senator Wicker's comments.

Senator Inhofe. Are there other Senators wishing to be heard? Senator Sullivan.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAN SULLIVAN, A UNITED STATES SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF ALASKA

Senator Sullivan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to commend you, the Ranking Member and particularly the staffs on the hard work that has gone into this legislation.

The one issue I think there will be, and we are starting to see it in this bill and some of the amendments that were agreed upon and bipartisan support for, is the whole issue of streamlining our permitting system at the federal level, not cutting corners, but recognizing that in many ways, we have a federal permitting system on infrastructure, in particular, that is broken.

We have all heard the different stories of eight years, on average, to permit a bridge. Nobody wants that. In the Commerce Committee, we talked about airport infrastructure. We had a witness, the manager of the Seattle Airport, who said it took 15 years to get federal permitting done to expand a runway.

I think what we need to focus on, and this legislation starts to focus on, is fixing a problem that the vast majority of Americans would agree that we cannot have a permitting system that takes years and sometimes over a decade to permit important infrastructure projects.

I think this legislation starts to address that. I think

it is a very important bipartisan accomplishment.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Sullivan follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Sullivan.

Senator Sanders?

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BERNARD SANDERS, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF VERMONT

Senator Sanders. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to congratulate you, Senator Boxer and Senators Vitter and Carper for your very hard work.

I think, as you indicated, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Boxer, as well, it is an international embarrassment when in this great Country we have an infrastructure which is crumbling. Who can defend that?

Who believes that by not paying attention to it or turning our backs on it, that it is going to get better? It is not going to get better. It is an expensive proposition and it is one that we have to invest in.

While this is an excellent start, I am strongly supportive of this legislation, but we should understand that according to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the guys who know a lot about this, we have a long, long way to go beyond this legislation.

Our job is to rebuild our crumbling roads, bridges, water systems, wastewater plants, our rail system, our levees and our dams. When we do that, as you have indicated, Mr. Chairman, we will make America more efficient, safer and more productive.

At a time when real unemployment is close to 11 percent, we are going to create millions of decent-paying jobs in areas

where we really need work to be done.

Again, I want to congratulate you, Senator Boxer and the Ranking Members for their excellent work on this legislation.

[The prepared statement of Senator Sanders follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Sanders.

Are there other Senators who want to be heard? Senator  
Markey.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ED MARKEY, A UNITED STATES SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Senator Markey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to echo the praise of every other member thanking you, Senator Boxer, and Senators Carper and Vitter for your excellent work, working together in partnership and bipartisan fashion.

I would like to thank you for including the language which I suggested adding safety to the historic concept of access in terms of ensuring that highways are designed with the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians also in mind.

I would like to also thank you for including language about transit-oriented development. I think this change towards how we view development, ensuring that there is upfront financing available so that these core centers of development can have high anticipation of being able to build out around a transit location is very, very important.

I would also say I have concerns about the change in Section 4(f) of the historic site protections. I am not going to make an amendment here today, but I do think many across the Country are going to be concerned about this change in terms of the protection of historic sites.

I am going to attempt to work with the committee between now and the Floor to see if we cannot find a way of

accommodating those historic protections.

Again, congratulations, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Markey follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Markey.

Senator Vitter.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DAVID VITTER, A UNITED STATES SENATOR  
FROM THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

Senator Vitter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to briefly thank you for your leadership, as well as Senator Boxer and Senator Carper. I really enjoyed working with all of you on this important bipartisan bill.

I am glad it is called the DRIVE Act. We talked about a lot of important aspects of this issue, economic growth and safety, but it is also about relieving congestion, improving peoples' daily lives, letting them spend more time with families. It is about all of those things.

Certainly it is very important to Louisiana, as it is to all of your States. Our highway system is 40th in the Nation, our interstates are 48th in the Nation, our bridges rank 10th in the Nation on the bad end as the most deficient and New Orleans and Baton Rouge both rank in the top 25 areas for traffic congestion.

This bill does key things to help with all of those things like bundling bridge projects together making it a lot more efficient, a new freight program that will relieve congestion in New Orleans and Baton Rouge, prioritizing major projects like I-49 and LA-1, improving safety measures, creating certainty, and infrastructure investment in rural areas.

I look forward to passing this out of committee and passing

it through the Congress, a full six-year bill. There is no reason we cannot do this. There is no reason we cannot do it now if it is a priority.

It is great to hear other leaders like Speaker Boehner saying it is a priority. We need to prove it is priority by passing this full six-year bill.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Senator Vitter follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Vitter.

It is a priority. Let us keep in mind the Constitution is still out there. It states these are the two things we are supposed to be doing here, defending America and roads and bridges.

Senator Carper.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS R. CARPER, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

Again, my thanks to you, Senator Boxer and Senator Vitter.

I also wanted to take a minute and thank our staffs. We have worked hard. You and Senator Boxer worked especially hard, but our staffs really knocked themselves out. I just want to say to everyone in the room who helped on this, maybe you have given us a lot of input and we appreciate that. Thank you all.

We are trying to impart a sense of urgency. God knows we need to. The pastor at our church sometimes likes to say he would rather see a sermon than hear one. Today, we are sort of hearing the sermon but we need, as a collective body, to actually show the people a sermon on being able to get things done.

One of our favorite colleagues, Lamar Alexander, whom I affectionately call LA, and I talked about our days as governors. He talked about transportation and tells this story. He used to say when he was governor, would not say let us raise this tax or raise that tax in order to pay for something. He would say, here is my vision for what Tennessee could be if we were to do this or that in terms of transportation, bring the auto industry to expand this business or that business, that was the vision.

The people would say, that is a great vision, we love that vision, but how are we going to pay for it. He would say, first, let us agree on the vision and then we go to work and figure out how to pay for it.

Today, I think we are presenting a very appealing, attractive and encouraging vision. The next challenge is to figure out how to pay for it. I know we all have different ideas of how to do that.

One of the ideas I think I talked to just about everyone on this committee, everyone on the Finance Committee and a lot of people on the Ways and Means Committee and said what is your idea of how to pay for this stuff. There were a lot of ideas, some good, some very good. One of the ideas I consistently heard was there has to be a way to fix the bill to fix roads, highways, bridges, and transit systems in a more cost effective way. There has to be a way to do that.

I just want to commend, especially the folks, the leaders on our committee, who really tried to find more cost effective ways. Time is money and we sought to find ways to save some time and hopefully to save some money.

I will close with this. Another one of my pastors back in Wilmington, Delaware likes to say, it is not so important how high we jump in church that counts, it is what we do when our feet hit the ground.

We are in church today and we are jumping up high. The important thing is what we do when we hit the ground in the Finance Committee, the Ways and Means Committee and those other places. Hopefully, we will do the Lord's work and the peoples' work at that time.

God bless you all. Amen. Church is over.

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Those were great observations. I agree with that. Let us keep in mind though we have a couple other committees that have a lesser role but a similar role. Our job is exactly what we are doing today. That is why we should be focused on what we are focused on. I think we will get it done.

Are there others who want to be heard? Senator Sessions.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JEFF SESSIONS, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA

Senator Sessions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You and Senator Boxer have done an excellent job. I know the commitment you both have to improving our highway program and our infrastructure.

Senator Carper, I remember in our church, speaking of churches, Mr. L.W. Brown would lay out this great vision and the treasurer, Mr. George Harster, would say, how are we going to pay for it? I think you made a very important point.

The way I look at the numbers at first glance, it appears, Mr. Chairman, this is a very frugal budget. We talk about numbers that do not increase a lot over the next six years. We do have a plan that would add \$2 billion for the freight transportation system but when you think about it, that is a five percent increase in a \$40 billion to \$50 billion budget. Then there is some cost of living that we may see in there.

I just saw Senator Hatch in the hallway as I walked over. I said, are you going to find our money? He said, yes. Maybe we can relax.

I do think we need to watch and be responsible because every committee, whether you have the National Institutes of Health, the Defense Department, Education, you want more money for your goal and we all do. If we will stay responsible in our

spending and get legitimate pay-fors, I believe we can shift some money to priorities. I do believe our infrastructure is a priority.

Thank you for your leadership.

[The prepared statement of Senator Sessions follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you.

Are there other Senators who wish to be heard? Senator  
Wicker.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ROGER F. WICKER, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Senator Wicker. Senator Carper, when I first joined the First Baptist Church in Tupelo, Mississippi in 1982, at the end of the service, we would all join hands and sing, There's A Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place. Maybe we can adjourn by doing that.

I do want to thank the leadership for working with Senator Booker and me on several initiatives and for accepting some of our proposals. I talked to Senator Booker at breakfast this morning and I know he has conflicts today. I had hoped I could save this one matter until he got here.

Wicker-Booker Amendment No. 1, which I will not offer, perhaps he and I will be able to push this through in a vote on the Floor. Here is what it deals with. Again, I stress I will not offer this amendment.

This Congress used to earmark a small portion of our road money for local concerns. This was much appreciated by the local officials who cannot afford the roads and streets in their own communities. That was controversial and it was felt by many members of the public that this added to the cost of the bill, so we have abandoned the process of earmarking funds for local concerns.

Wicker-Booker Amendment No. 1 would set aside 10 percent of

the money allocated to the States and allow local governments to compete in a process set up by the State for those local projects, giving the mayors, the county commissioners, and boards of supervisors who come to see us at least some hope they would have a chance to compete for a small portion of the funding that will flow to the States through this Act.

To me, it has been something I think local officials have been very excited about, very hopeful about and I am sure there will be some disappointment that it is not in the committee's mark.

I will reiterate, we are not going to offer it at this point, but it is, to me, a worthy suggestion and a worthy project not to increase one penny of the spending in this bill, but to set aside a small portion to give local counties and municipalities some hope they will be able to meet the infrastructure needs of their constituents.

Thank you again.

[The prepared statement of Senator Wicker follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Wicker.

Senator Cardin.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE BENJAMIN CARDIN, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND

Senator Cardin. Mr. Chairman, let me join the others in congratulating you and Senator Boxer for reaching this bipartisan agreement on a six-year reauthorization of our Surface Transportation Program.

I have been saying for months, I think most of us have, that we needed a six-year reauthorization. I congratulate you for reaching, with Senator Boxer, I think a fair compromise, one that I will strongly support. It provides the type of certainty that is needed and provides for a modest increase in our transportation funds which I think we need to get done, and it is bipartisan.

I want to thank you for the manner in which you have handled the transportation alternative programs. Senator Cochran and I have worked on this for a long time and I appreciate the fact that you are not only including this program that has been included in past authorizations, but have provided a modest increase in funds and greater local roles.

The local governments will have an even greater say as to how their transportation alternative programs should be structured in their own communities because they know best. They are the ones who know how they can best handle the problems of their own communities.

I thank you for doing that. I look forward to supporting the bill. I intended to offer an amendment in regards to transportation alternative programs but I am not going to offer that amendment.

I will later, when we get to the amendment process reiterate the point that, as Senator Sanders said, I would hope we could do more. To me, this is an important bill to get done. Do not get me wrong, but I would hope that we could get additional revenue, which is not this committee, and have a more robust transportation commitment at the federal level.

I think the Chairman and Ranking Member would both agree if the funds are available, we would like to do more. I will give a blueprint where I think we could do that as far as authorization, if the funds were available.

[The prepared statement of Senator Cardin follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Are there other Senators wishing to seek recognition?

Senator Gillibrand.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, A UNITED STATES  
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Senator Gillibrand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Madam  
Ranking Member.

I am very grateful for this bill. I would like to speak on  
an amendment I sponsored with Senator Merkley.

Our amendment reduces highway maintenance costs for States  
by directing the Secretary of Transportation to use existing  
authorities, programs and funding to encourage and facilitate  
the use of pollinator-friendly vegetation in highway rights-of-  
way.

This is an issue typically discussed in the Agriculture  
Committee because obviously we need our pollinators to have  
fruits and vegetables. There have been some real challenges to  
them most recently with Colony Collapse Disorder.

This Country is actually facing a pollinator crisis. This  
past year, beekeepers reported colony losses at over 40 percent.  
This is economically devastating for commercial beekeepers, but  
these losses concern us all.

In the U.S., the value of insect pollination to agriculture  
is estimated at \$16 billion annually. More than 30 percent of  
the food produced in America requires insect pollination. This  
includes apples from New York, plums from Idaho, almonds from  
California, grains and seeds from South Dakota, grapes from

Oregon and many others.

The economic cost of bee decline, including lower crop yields and increased production costs, has been estimated at \$5.7 billion per year, a staggering sum that affects our States.

The potential causes of the declining bee population are still being debated, parasites, pesticides, farming practices. However, it is known that habitat loss is a main contributing factor. Pollinators need places to forage, to eat in areas rich with pollen and not treated with pesticides. In the U.S., there are 17 million acres of rights-of-way next to highways that, if managed properly, could provide this much needed area for forage.

Finally and importantly, Mr. Chairman, this amendment saves money for States. At least 20 State DOTs, including West Virginia, Mississippi, Idaho, Arkansas, and Nebraska currently utilize or invest in native and pollinator-friendly roadside plantings.

Pollinator-friendly vegetation management requires less frequent mowing, offers lower maintenance costs and better control of invasive species, all without affecting road safety. One study found that the cost savings from reduced mowing would save 25 percent in roadside maintenance.

This amendment is a simple fix to address a major problem. It saves money and is an easy step to save the pollinators that

are necessary for agriculture in our States. I hope all my colleagues support it.

On another issue, I would like to speak on an amendment but withdraw it, Gillibrand Amendment No. 2.

This amendment would give States the flexibility to use funding they receive through the National Highway Performance Program for bridge projects that are not on the national highway system.

The Federal Government funded the construction of bridges on the Federal-Aid Highway System. We have a responsibility to ensure they are properly maintained. States and local governments simply do not have the funds necessary to adequately repair and reconstruct all of the Federal-aid bridges not on the National Highway System and desperately need our help.

In New York, one in three bridges is in need of repairs. It would cost \$1.8 billion to repair or replace all of them. This is not a story unique to my State. States and localities across this Country lack adequate funding for bridge maintenance. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, one out of every nine bridges in the United States is rated structurally deficient, meaning that it is in need of repair.

While I appreciate the set aside in the Surface Transportation Program for the non-NHS bridges that was included

in the bill, the setaside does not fully solve the problem if we only limit funding to 15 percent of existing STP allocations.

By giving States like New York, which have a large number of federal-aid highway bridges that are not on the National Highway System with the flexibility this amendment provides, States can better prioritize and fund the bridge projects with the most need, regardless of their designation on or off the National Highway System.

I will not offer the amendment here in committee but I will offer it on the Floor. I hope people will look at it, see how it affects their States and whether they can support it.

My other amendments, Amendment Nos. 3 and 4, I will not offer today. However, I will state briefly it is very important for my State that we continue to work with local governments to develop comprehensive safety policies similar to what New York has done with the Vision Zero Program to reduce traffic fatalities.

Additionally, we should also be working to find innovative ways to accelerate project delivery for cities like New York that have the capacity to work directly with the Federal Government to carry out transportation projects.

I am very grateful for the work of this whole committee. I think the bill is very strong and I look forward to it moving to the floor.

Senator Inhofe. I would remind Senator Gillibrand that we did have your Amendment No. 1 as a part of the Manager's Amendment which has now been adopted.

Senator Gillibrand. Thank you all.

[The prepared statement of Senator Gillibrand follows:]

Senator Inhofe. Are there others? I do not want to start losing people.

Senator Boxer. Thirty seconds?

Senator Inhofe. Thirty seconds.

Senator Boxer. Thirty seconds.

I just want to say how happy I am right now after hearing from everyone and how rare these moments are. I believe in marking good things. I look at Senator Sessions because I was nervous about his response but what he said was absolutely true. We have done this to meet the need.

Yes, there will be struggles over how to pay. Dwight Eisenhower said it very well, "We cannot be a secure Nation, if we cannot have an infrastructure that works." I remember, I was a little girl when he did an experiment where he tried to get a convoy from the East Coast to the West Coast. It was disastrous and that is what made him realize this one Nation under God has to have a good infrastructure system.

In closing, I would say this. We have to be a team across party lines. With all of our concerns, we like to do things a little different, let us just work together because I have also spoken with Mitch McConnell's staff and they were very encouraging.

If we have Mitch McConnell encouraged, if we have John Boehner encouraged, we have proven we can do this. Let us be

the strongest, united voice we can be to get this done. We have 36 days before the Trust Fund goes bust. This is a great day.

Senator Booker. Mr. Chairman, I know how much you really want to hear my prepared remarks.

Senator Inhofe. I can put them in the record.

Senator Booker. I am going to deny you that and just put them in the record as requested. I am sorry to disappoint my fellow Senators.

I do want to just give some gratitude to Senator Wicker who has been a strong partner with me in working to advance some critical issues.

Thank you, sir.

[The prepared statement of Senator Booker follows:]

Senator Inhofe. He made that statement before he talked about yours.

Seeing no further members wanting to seek recognition or offer amendments, I am going to move to accept the underlying text.

Senator Cardin. Mr. Chairman, I wanted to offer an amendment. I did not know we were past that stage. I am going to offer and withdraw but I did not realize that was going to be precluded. I will only take 30 seconds or maybe 60 seconds.

I wanted to call up Amendment No. 3 and I will withdraw it. This is the Grow America Act which would increase the six-year authorization to \$478 billion consistent with the President's budget. I do that respectful of the strong support for the underlying bill. I will withdraw the amendment.

I serve not only on this committee but the Senate Finance Committee. I am going to be part of the process to find the revenue necessary. I know there is a bipartisan group that believes we can find additional revenue.

We think through international tax reform, there is an opportunity for some permanent and one-time only revenues and that infrastructure is critically important to this Country. If we are going to be able to be globally competitive, able to deal with the safety challenges we have in our communities, able to deal with the growth needs and able to get places without the

extreme congestion that exists today, able to do all those issues, we need a program that is able to meet those needs.

I think the Grow America Act would do that. I would encourage us to keep an open mind if we can get the additional revenues for a more robust plan than is currently being submitted for approval here.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would ask consent to withdraw the amendment.

Senator Inhofe. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

I move to accept S. 1647, as amended and report the legislation favorably to the Senate. Is there a second?

Senator Boxer. Second.

Senator Inhofe. There is a second. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk. Mr. Barrasso?

Senator Barrasso. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Booker?

Senator Booker. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Boozman?

Senator Inhofe. Aye by proxy.

The Clerk. Mrs. Boxer?

Senator Boxer. Aye.

The Clerk. Mrs. Capito?

Senator Capito. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Cardin?

Senator Cardin. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Carper?

Senator Boxer. Aye by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Crapo?

Senator Inhofe. Aye by proxy.

The Clerk. Mrs. Fischer?

Senator Fischer. Aye.

The Clerk. Mrs. Gillibrand?

Senator Gillibrand. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Markey?

Senator Markey. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Merkley?

Senator Boxer. Aye by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Rounds?

Senator Rounds. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Sanders?

Senator Sanders. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Sessions?

Senator Sessions. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Vitter?

Senator Inhofe. Aye by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Whitehouse?

Senator Whitehouse. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Wicker?

Senator Wicker. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Chairman.

Senator Inhofe. Aye.

Senator Boozman. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Boozman votes aye.

Senator Inhofe. Senator Boozman votes aye in person.

The Clerk. Mr. Chairman, the yeas are 20 and the nays are zero.

Senator Inhofe. The bill passes.

I want to thank everyone for a good turnout this morning. I appreciate you.

I want to get one more motion in here. I ask unanimous consent that staff have the authority to make technical and conforming changes to the measure approved today.

Senator Whitehouse. Mr. Chairman, I did not want to hold anyone while the vote was pending, but I do want to also particularly thank everyone for their support for what had been known as the Projects of National Regional Significance. It is now known as the AMP Project for big things because there are a lot of big projects that need to be done. I think this will allow that to happen. It is a very significant piece of the bill. I thank all of our leaders for making sure that was

included.

Senator Inhofe. We have no more. We are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:14 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]