best under the circumstances. Congress needs to change the circumstances; comprehensive reform and, at a minimum, a reauthorization of the Corporate Environmental Income Tax (which expired on December 31, 1995) should be the next course of action.

Mr. Speaker, this is a good bill for science, a good bill for the space program, and a good bill for the environment. It aptly illustrates the tremendous leadership provided by my good friend from New York, Chairman WALSH, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2001

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 9, 2001

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I join Chairman YOUNG in introducing (by request) the Administration's bill to reauthorize the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) hazardous materials program. Given the recent threats to our nation's security, it is particularly important that we have in place a program that strengthens the Department of Transportation's inspection and enforcement authority over hazardous materials movements. To address the threats to the security and safety associated with the transportation of hazardous materials, DOT inspectors need clear authority to open and inspect packages they believe might contain hazardous materials and to issue emergency orders to stop unsafe practices that pose an immediate threat to life, property, and the environment.

The bill also addresses the problem of undeclared hazardous materials shipments by mail. The bill authorizes the United States Postal Service to collect fines and recover damages for violations of hazardous materials regulations. The proposal calls for substantial increases in penalties for those who would violate Federal hazardous materials laws and regulations.

However, I have a number of concerns with the Administration's proposal that I hope we will address during consideration of any hazardous materials legislation. This is not the time to compromise on the safety and security of hazardous materials transportation.

The risks from serious hazmat releases to employees of hazmat transporters and the public-at-large are simply too great to allow for legislation that offers anything but the highest level of protection. I look forward to working with the Chairman, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Administration to craft a hazardous materials reauthorization bill that will best meet the needs of hazardous materials transporters, their workers, and the American people.