

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I thank the former Governor of Virginia. He knows how to balance a budget and how to have a strong budget for the good people of this country. I share his frustration that we are not able to bring this long-awaited budget that we finally passed in the Senate to conference with the House. I hope minds will change and we will be able to get this done.

Again, I thank the Senator for his leadership and for a balanced approach on reducing the debt.

#### WATER RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. I come to the floor today to speak on the importance of passing the Water Resources Development Act or, as we know it around Washington, the WRDA bill.

In my State they know it as a bill that is good for our harbors, rivers, and the flood protection we need in the Fargo-Moorhead area or, as I like to call it in Minnesota, the Moorhead-Fargo area.

The bill advances a critical front to protect the Red River of the north to Moorhead, MN, and Fargo, ND. I visited this region twice over the last year, and I have been back literally every year I have been in the Senate because of flood threats—these years more than ever.

This is literally an every-year occurrence now to the point where people have major sandbag operations filled with volunteers, seniors, and people from the prisons. Everyone is working together, but there must be a better way to do this. Just because we do it so well in North Dakota and Minnesota and have such an incredible spirit of voluntarism doesn't mean there is going to be one year where the flood is too great or that we should continue on this path when, in fact, we have the opportunity to have long-term flood protection.

The river has been above major flood stage 6 out of the last 8 years. In 2009, the year of the record flood, the river rose to more than 40 feet.

I will remind the Presiding Officer of the Grand Forks flood and what happened there. It was literally just about an hour away from Fargo. So we were that close to that happening in Fargo and Moorhead.

In Minnesota and North Dakota, the Red River doesn't divide us, it unites us. It is in that spirit of solidarity that we drive our efforts to help the Red River Basin. This year we were fortunate that the flooding was not nearly as severe as it had been projected. A week before the crest went down, it was projected to be the second biggest flood in history with the late snow.

In 2009 and 2010 homes and farms with ring dikes around them looked like small islands floating in the floodwaters. If anyone thinks this lasts for a day or week, it literally lasts for months. Entire towns create ring

dikes, and they can only get out of them with boats. That is what is happening near the Canadian border in Minnesota and North Dakota. The town of Georgetown, MN, is threatened every time the Red River rises and the Buffalo River overflows.

The volunteer who was working at the emergency center—I went up to him and said: It is so nice that you are making lunches for people. He said he lost his entire home.

I said: And you are here?

He said: Yes, this is the only thing I could think of to do to help other people who had the same bad experience as me. That is the spirit of voluntarism in our States.

I think we can do better. The annual threat of flooding in the Fargo-Moorhead area underscores the need for permanent flood protection. We know about the devastating impact of floods. The flood diversion project, which is authorized in the WRDA bill, is critical to safety and economic development.

I have enjoyed working with Congressman PETERSON on flood diversion efforts, including retention, which he cares a lot about, and we did get some funding for that. I was able to get funding in the farm bill today to help with that. I have also worked with Senator HOEVEN, Senator HEITKAMP, and Senator FRANKEN on this long-term project to have actual permanent solutions to our flooding project in Fargo and Moorhead.

We have a problem, and the WRDA bill is the beginning of a solution. Also included in this bill is a Roseau River project, which is at a critical point. The WRDA bill helps address flood protection for Roseau, MN. Roseau has recovered from a flood in 2002 that caused widespread damage, but the area needs flood protection to reduce the flood stages in the city. The next phase of the plan will include a diversion channel, a restriction structure, and two storage areas designed to remove the city from the regular 100-year regulatory floodplain and reduce future flood damages by nearly 86 percent.

The WRDA bill also advances our Nation's water infrastructure, which is something the Presiding Officer knows a little bit about in Massachusetts. It is clear that our 21st-century economy demands 21st-century infrastructure, and we cannot afford to sit back any longer and allow it to crumble. No place knows this better than Minnesota.

I lived six blocks from that 35W bridge, which is an eight-lane highway. One day, in the middle of a summer day, the bridge fell down in the middle of the Mississippi River. As I said that day, a bridge just shouldn't fall down in the middle of America, but it did.

We are seeing the same crumbling infrastructure and problems with many of our ports across the country. Failure to take action will have consequences no one likes. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, inefficiencies in infrastructure are esti-

mated to drive up the cost of doing business by an estimated \$430 billion, and that is just in this decade.

The civil engineers' 2013 report card gives our Nation's infrastructure an overall D-plus grade. As someone who has taught students before, I think the Presiding Officer knows that is not a good grade. Our inland waterways infrastructure, which includes our locks and dams on the Mississippi River, gets a D-minus, and our ports received a C grade. We cannot be satisfied with those grades.

When people hear "ports" they think of places such as Massachusetts, South Carolina, Florida, and California. But, in fact, the Great Lakes—including Lake Superior, which we are so proud of in Minnesota—have very significant ports.

In fact, when I first came to the Senate, I was assigned to the Commerce Committee and somehow found myself on the oceans subcommittee. I remember sitting at my first meeting thinking: What am I doing here? I am on the oceans subcommittee. I wrote a note to the Senator from New Jersey, FRANK LAUTENBERG, that said: I am the only Senator on the subcommittee who doesn't have an ocean. I kept the note he wrote back to me. The note said: It is easy, next year just come back and ask for one.

Well, in fact, I found out since then that the oceans subcommittee included the Great Lakes so it gave me a platform to advocate for our Great Lakes. The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, which is so important to our ocean-bordering States, also includes the Great Lakes. The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund collects \$700 million each year more than it spends on dredging. In other words, it collects \$700 million more each year than it spends on dredging and maintenance.

Meanwhile, our ports and navigation channels wait for basic maintenance. We need to correct this disparity and ensure the funds are spent to address the needs of the shippers and ensure that the Great Lakes system does not fall into further disrepair.

I was just up at the Port of Duluth-Superior to highlight the need for dredging and maintenance on the Great Lakes. The Port of Duluth-Superior is ranked among the top 20 ports in the U.S. by cargo tonnage. It sees 40 million short tons of cargo and nearly 1,000 vessel visits every year. I think people would be surprised by that since Minnesota has lakes. In fact, we have 1 of the top 20 ports in the country.

We have 11,500 jobs that are dependent on cargo shipments in and out of the port. The port is critical to the economy of northeastern Minnesota where my dad was born and my grandpa worked as an iron ore miner. Guess what. That is how they got the iron ore out of Minnesota and out to the world.

It is critical that high-use ports like Duluth and Two Harbors get dredged so they can support the ships. It is vital

that their trading partners throughout the Great Lakes system receive maintenance as well. Both Duluth and Two Harbors, MN, ports are considered deep-water ports, so they come into a classification which has tended to get the funding, but, in fact, the entire Great Lakes navigation system is in trouble.

The backlog of sediment due to insufficient dredging is more than 18 million cubic yards and estimated at \$200 million. When ships on the Great Lakes have to “light load”—having to reduce the amount of cargo they carry because channels are not deep enough—our economy suffers.

At first some people might think: What does light loading mean? At the end of 2012, the light loading to navigate the Soo Locks on the St. Mary's River between Lake Superior and Lake Huron meant 10,000 tons of cargo could not be transported on the final voyage. Think of it. These are American goods that our workers produced, and we want them to make more of it. Yet we literally cannot put them on the ships because we have not maintained our ports the way we are supposed to.

The ships that are coming in cannot take the goods. They have to wait until the winter is done. That is what happened this year and has been happening many years.

We are an export economy. America's way forward is to make goods again, invent, and export to the world. Well, that is not going to happen if we cannot get our goods to market. That is why I have been working so closely with Senators from across the Great Lakes to address this backlog. We have been able to make some progress.

I cosponsored an amendment with Senator LEVIN to direct the Secretary of the Army Corps to manage the Great Lakes navigation system as an interconnected system. This would ensure that maintenance and dredging is done throughout the system. There is much more to do. I will continue to work with Senator LEVIN, Senator STABENOW, and other Great Lakes Senators on this bill.

The WRDA bill will go a long way toward increasing the efficiency of the shipping across the Great Lakes system, thereby strengthening the economic standing of our agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and other industries.

The bill also makes critical reforms to our Nation's rivers and waterways. The inland waterway system in this country spans 38 States and handles approximately one-half of the inland waterway freight. Farmers and businesses in my State transport soybeans, corn, and other commodities from Minnesota to other terminals in the South. From there, ships are loaded and the commodities are eventually delivered to trading partners.

Again, if we want to produce and export to the world, we have to have the transportation system that supports it. With many maintenance and construc-

tion projects years overdue, the inland waterways are in dire need of major rehabilitation. The Inland Waterways Trust Fund, which funds these projects, is in steady decline. If we don't make the Inland Waterways Trust Fund sustainable, the industries that are so heavily dependent on the inland waterways will suffer, and this means jobs suffer.

I cosponsored the RIVER Act with Senator CASEY and Senator LANDRIEU to help move forward major construction projects on the inland waterway system. That bill is also supported by Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER. It is a bipartisan bill, and it includes much needed rehabilitation of the locks and dams along the Mississippi River.

This bill includes a number of reforms to the project management process that will ensure that waterway projects are completed on time and minimize cost overruns.

I also, by the way, support the amendment to increase the inland waterways user fee. I am a cosponsor of that amendment. Let me emphasize that the users who pay this fee have asked for it. We have a situation where the industries are willing to pay more so we can improve the locks and dams so they can get their goods to market. That is what is going on here. They understand we are having budget issues, and they are willing to pay a higher fee to pay for the changes.

Industry partners from farmers to shippers to companies, such as cargo companies in my State, strongly support this user fee increase. The increase was, in fact, their idea. They realized that the government wasn't going to fund these and that they were having trouble doing business, and they have agreed to pay for this increased fee. To me, it is the perennial no-brainer that we get this done. They know this modest change would go a long way to making our Nation's rivers and waterways viable for years to come.

While the fee increase will not advance, sadly, in the WRDA bill because it is considered a tax provision, it sends an important message that industry and shippers are at the table and volunteering more to help build the infrastructure our economic future requires. We plan on advancing this part of the river act in another bill—in tax reform or standing on its own—because we think it is so important to be able to fund these improvements to the locks.

Finally, in Minnesota, the fishing and boating industries contribute around \$4 billion to our State's economy each year. Sometimes I like to tease people and ask them how much money do they think we spend on worms in Minnesota every year. Well, it is literally tens of millions of dollars. People come to our State and buy worms and bait and other forms of fishing tackle because of their importance to our economy. In fact, for last week-end's Minnesota fishing opener, sadly,

cold and ice covered many lakes, but people were still out there looking for that empty hole where there wasn't ice so they could put their line into the water.

In Minnesota, we also know how important it is to address invasive species problems, especially when they threaten our lakes and rivers. In our State the problem of Asian carp is literally swimming and jumping into our lives. Anyone who hasn't seen the YouTube video should look at it. You can see Asian carp literally jumping out of the water and hitting fishermen in the head. We are very concerned because we have seen problems with them downriver in southern Minnesota. They are coming our way, and we do not want them to ruin our way of life in Minnesota, nor do we want them to hurt our jobs and our \$4 billion fishing and gaming industry.

I believe we need an “all-of-the-above” solution to this challenge that includes research, carp barriers, as well as authority to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock. I am very glad the provision was included to allow for greater coordination between Federal agencies when it comes to Asian carp, and this also includes rivers and not just the Great Lakes.

So we are continuing to work on this bill when it comes to Asian carp and other invasive species, but I think there are some other good provisions in this bill as well.

I wish to commend Senators BOXER and VITTER for their great work to put together this bipartisan legislation. I support its passage, from fighting to protect towns from flooding to critical waterway infrastructure. This legislation is vital to our economy, to our environment, to our cities, and to our towns. I am excited to be a part of it. I hope my colleagues support it and we can get this done.

Thank you, Madam President. I yield the floor.

#### 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF KENTUCKY BUS CRASH TRAGEDY

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to commemorate a sad and tragic event in Kentucky history that happened 25 years ago today: on May 14, 1988, a horrific bus crash occurred on I-71 near Carrollton, KY. Twenty-seven people were killed, 24 of them children, and 34 were injured when a drunk driver traveling in the wrong direction hit the bus. It remains the worst drunk-driving crash in American history.

On this day 25 years ago, the Radcliff First Assembly of God Church in Radcliff, KY, organized a youth trip to a nearby amusement park, and drove 170 miles to Cincinnati in the church bus. The bus was full with 67 passengers. After a fun day of roller coasters and ice cream, at 10:55 that night, on the return trip, a drunk driver in a pickup truck traveling north in the southbound lane of I-71 struck the church bus directly head-on.