

marathon of votes known as a vote-arama. Once debate on the budget has ended, we have a vote-arama. Without time for debate or analysis of what is being proposed, this process is not conducive to substantive consideration of fiscal policy and serves as a major deterrent to considering a budget on the floor. The discussion draft aims to establish a more orderly process for Senate consideration of the budget resolution that ensures the ability of Senators from both sides of the aisle to offer and have votes on amendments.

It would change the current 50-hour rule on debate of a budget resolution to a limit on consideration and force the Senate to consider amendments after all allotted general debate time expires. Amendments would alternate between those offered by the minority and those offered by the majority, and the maximum debate time on the first-degree amendments would be reduced from 2 hours to 1 hour, to allow for the consideration of more amendments.

Under this proposal, even if the maximum debate time was burned on each amendment, 24 amendments could be considered. Coincidentally, 24 is both the average and the median number of rollcall votes on budget resolutions since 1976. Of course, it isn't 1 minute of debate. It would be an hour of debate.

This proposal would apply only to the Senate consideration of budget resolutions. It would not preclude adoption of a managers' package, apply to reconciliation bills, or change House procedures.

We can all agree that the current budget and spending system has broken down. Reforming this dysfunctional system has been a goal of mine since entering the Senate and is one of my top priorities before I leave this body at the end of this Congress.

I encourage my colleagues to consider the reform ideas I have laid out today and invite their feedback. I am hopeful that through this process, we will be able to reach bipartisan agreement to end the current dysfunction and put our country back toward a sustainable fiscal future—and on time so we will not have government shutdowns.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

AMERICA'S TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
ACT

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, yesterday I joined the fellow leaders of the Environment and Public Works Committee to introduce America's Transportation Infrastructure Act, a 5-year reauthorization bill that would deliver resources to repair and maintain critical surface transportation infrastructure.

Today the committee approved our comprehensive legislation with a strong bipartisan vote of 21 to 0 this morning.

As the chair of the EPW's Transportation and Infrastructure Sub-

committee, I am incredibly proud of this legislation, which is the result of months of serious negotiations with the full committee chairman, Senator BARRASSO, and Ranking Member CARPER, my subcommittee, and my ranking member, Senator CARDIN of Maryland.

It was not always easy, but I think we have produced a bill that achieves our priorities and secures needed investments in our Nation's infrastructure. First and foremost, the bill provides additional funding for highway investment. How many times do we hear: We don't have enough money to complete this. We can't get it done.

This also maintains the States' shares through formula dollars. That means a rising tide lifts all boats, whether a State is urban or rural, like my home State of West Virginia.

The majority of these funds—90 percent—are distributed by the formula to the States, providing maximum flexibility to our State programs, and with a full 5-year reauthorization, State DOTs will have the certainty they need to plan their investments without fear of lapses in their contracting authority. After all, it is the States, not the bureaucrats in Washington, that know their communities' needs the best.

Our legislation would get rid of some of the obstacles the States face as they work to start and finalize infrastructure plans. They take forever, and they cost so much. The bill incorporates the Trump administration's focus on One Federal Decision. Under that policy, the U.S. Department of Transportation is in charge of leading the regulatory review process—One Federal Decision—and it would consolidate the review of other Federal agencies like the EPA, the Corps of Engineers, and others who weigh in on these projects. That means the States will not end up in a regulatory purgatory, going back and forth from agency to agency seeking endless approvals.

DOT would also maintain a Federal dashboard system so the States can see where they stand in the process.

America's Transportation Infrastructure Act directs the Department of Transportation to work to complete its review process within 2 years and to push other agencies to expedite their regulatory reviews. Everything drags on so much, and it makes it so long and expensive. This would push our agencies to expedite their regulatory reviews under its own categorical exclusions. That is a fancy term for when the Department doesn't think a full, costly, and time-consuming permitting process is necessary for a straightforward infrastructure project such as replacing a bridge from right where it is and putting a new bridge right where it is. It takes forever. So we would eliminate that.

We also worked in a bipartisan way to promote natural infrastructure that will help reduce costs and timelines, diminish environmental impacts, and improve the resiliency of our infra-

structure to natural disasters such as floods that are so common in my part of the country.

West Virginia has the unfortunate title of being in the top five States of structurally deficient bridges. That is why I am very proud that America's Transportation and Infrastructure Act includes language I cosponsored with Senator BROWN implementing the new Bridge Investment Program.

This program will infuse \$6 billion over 5 years in additional funding to fix bridges in poor condition—dedicated funding that is essential to addressing this problem.

When faced with the decision on using scarce taxpayer dollars on a new highway expansion or improving bridge safety, too often—it is too tempting—States opt for the appeal of a ribbon-cutting on a new stretch of highway. Now, hopefully, they won't have to make that choice and we can reduce both congestion and the odds of a bridge failure—something that not only threatens our lives but also cuts off a community while they wait for a costly replacement.

The climate and resilience portion of America's Transportation Infrastructure Act will reduce emissions from the transportation sector and ensure that the taxpayers are not repeatedly replacing infrastructure affected by natural disasters.

This portion of the bill also includes important bipartisan legislation that I cosponsored. The first is called the USE IT Act. This would facilitate the deployment of carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies by reducing regulatory obligations that the project stakeholders would face. It also includes the Diesel Emissions Reduction Act, which will provide funding to States and communities to replace older, smog-producing vehicles—like obsolete schoolbuses—with modern vehicles that use diesel, propane, natural gas, and electricity.

Most importantly for West Virginia and for broader Appalachia, this legislation includes several provisions, which I wrote, to accelerate the completion of the Appalachian Development Highway System and reauthorize the economic development activities of the Appalachian Regional Commission. The commission was first authorized in 1965. The Appalachian Development Highway System was designed to better integrate our region with the Midwest, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and South. For an economically-distressed area with communities that are relatively isolated, this infrastructure network is vital. It is vital for attracting investment, creating new economic opportunities, and improving quality of life.

The Appalachian Regional Commission has found that the highway system has already created and supported more than 168,000 jobs and generated \$7.8 billion in wage income that otherwise would not have existed. Those wages, in turn, drive local and Federal

tax bases. Completing this system would generate an additional \$8.7 billion in annual economic activity. It would support another 46,000 jobs and lead to an additional \$2.7 billion in worker income. These are very significant numbers. I can't really overstate the impact this additional economic activity would have in our region.

Unfortunately, the Appalachian Development Highway System is only 90 percent complete. The remaining 10 percent generally represents the most challenging mountain terrain, and that means these are the costliest and most environmentally complicated miles to complete. We have to get this done.

The highway system was started almost 55 years ago. America is better than letting an infrastructure priority just sit around for more than half a century with no end in sight due to lack of funding or regulatory uncertainty. This was also a promise made to the people of Appalachia.

The Appalachian Development Highway System completion was identified as being in our national interest in the last two highway bills. But it is America's Transportation Infrastructure Act that will actually provide a mechanism to move us toward the finish line.

Beyond the regulatory reforms I just spoke about, my language allows States that for whatever reason have accrued significant Appalachian Development Highway System balances to exchange those dollars with States like West Virginia that are still working to complete projects, like our Corridor H. But we lack the resources to engineer and construct these challenging remaining miles. In return, those States that turn their dollars back in to the Appalachian Development Highway System will receive dollars that they could use for any project in their State that would otherwise be eligible as a Federal highway project. That means that States can respond to the changing transportation needs in their particular area. They use excess dollars from an undersubscribed Federal loan program, which has historically not contributed to infrastructure investment in rural America.

This would be a win for all States involved. Those needing additional funding will be able to continue to advance the Appalachian Development Highway System, and States that have needed to shift their focus—say on growing urban transportation needs—will have the added flexibility to be able to do that.

I appreciate my fellow Appalachian Development Highway System State committee colleagues for working with me to include this provision, as well as Leader McCONNELL's support on this section of the bill and our counterpart legislation, the Advancing Infrastructure Development in Appalachia Act.

The committee also included language that I wrote and worked with those individuals on to reauthorize the Appalachian Regional Commission—a key economic development agency—at

\$180 million a year. My provision also doubles to \$20 million the funding available for something that I care deeply about, and that is broadband deployment in Appalachia, which is a critical tool for connecting our communities and making and keeping our region more competitive.

I thank Leader McCONNELL and Ranking Member CARDIN and Senator WICKER for their support of this language and the stand-alone ARC authorization bill.

Leader McCONNELL also joined me in authorizing the ARC to provide up to \$5 million in grants to support the development of a central Appalachian natural gas liquids storage hub, along with the associated downstream manufacturing sector for it. This infrastructure project would be huge for the economies of West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. In fact, the American Chemistry Council estimates that this regional market and downstream manufacturing would generate \$36 billion in capital investment and more than 100,000 jobs. It would also help keep a much larger share of the economic value and employment opportunity in our States where the resources are, compared to just producing and then exporting the gas and associated natural gas liquids to other parts of the country or abroad.

Secretary Perry and the Department of Energy have also endorsed the concept of this project, as well as the significant economic and energy security dividends that it would pay for Appalachia and the entire United States.

This is somewhat of a modest investment given the significant private sector capital needed to build this out, but it is essential that the Federal Government send clear messages to potential investors that it supports this driver of economic growth in an area that would greatly benefit.

This legislation gives the ARC the power to lead the way.

Investment in our country's infrastructure is vital to the many aspects of our American life, from keeping us competitive in the global economy and keeping our drivers safe—there are a lot of safety aspects in this bill—to reducing irritating congestion and minimizing impacts to the economy.

America's Transportation Infrastructure Act delivers on all these fronts and ensures that rural America will benefit equally from these investments. Not only will our legislation help rebuild and repair our infrastructure system, but it will also help us create new infrastructure opportunities for generations to come.

I appreciate my colleagues' collaboration. My colleague from Rhode Island is on the floor. He was on the committee this morning when we both voted in favor of this legislation. It is a bipartisan bill working to make sure that this country sees a 5-year highway reauthorization and all the benefits it would provide.

I think all my Senate colleagues will find a lot to like in this legislation. I

am hoping we get it on the floor in the fall. I encourage their support when it comes time for a vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. MCSALLY). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I thank the distinguished Senator from West Virginia for her work on the highway bill that we voted out of the Environment and Public Works Committee today and on our industrial emissions bill and on carbon capture. It has been a terrific working relationship.

TRIBUTE TO DR. KIM BINSTED AND DR. RYAN EDWARDS

Madam President, as I begin my 251st "Time to Wake Up" remarks, I would like to thank two AAAS fellows who will be shortly leaving my office.

Dr. Kim Binsted came to us from the University of Hawaii, where she was principal investigator on the NASA-sponsored Hi-Seas project, studying conditions like those that astronauts would encounter on Mars. Next month, she returns to Hawaii to continue her research.

Dr. Ryan Edwards joined us after completing his Ph.D. at Princeton University, where he studied carbon capture and storage. He hails from Australia and is thus by far the best cricket player on my staff—low bar. Next up for him will be Houston and more carbon capture research.

I thank both of them for their service and their expertise, and I wish them the best.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Madam President, tomorrow, about 2½ miles from here, executives from some of the biggest fossil fuel companies in the world will be meeting at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. It is a power-packed event. The chamber is the most powerful lobbying force here in Washington and a fierce political operator. The fossil fuel industry runs remorseless and often covert political operations. They are defending a \$650 billion annual subsidy, as the International Monetary Fund estimates, so hundreds of millions spent on lobbying and election mischief is money well spent: The Chamber and Big Oil together have stopped climate progress here.

For the member companies of the chamber, including companies that say they support climate action, it is time to confront the relationship between the chamber and the fossil fuel industry. The Earth is spinning toward climate catastrophe. Action in Congress to limit carbon pollution is essential to averting this catastrophe. Yet the chamber, according to the watchdog InfluenceMap, is in a virtual tie as the most obstructive group on climate change, blocking legislation, opposing Executive action, and even seeking to undermine climate science. The chamber is so obstructive, it would be better called the Chamber of Carbon.

The chamber has opposed one comprehensive climate bill after another—