

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—

first, the bipartisan cap-and-trade bill in 2005, the Energy Policy Act. The chamber helped defeat it with a Key Vote Alert—a signal that whoever voted in favor of the bill could face an onslaught of Chamber political attacks in the next election.

In 2007, the chamber ran political TV ads against climate legislation, claiming that it would prevent people from heating their homes or that they wouldn't be able to drive to work any longer. Here is somebody cooking an egg over candles.

In 2009, the chamber led the charge against the Waxman-Markey bill. For that legislation, the chamber pulled out all the stops—haranguing Members, more “vote alerts” and “how they voted” scorecards, sending more messages of election doom if they dared to support Waxman-Markey. Since the U.S. Chamber tanked Waxman-Markey, Republicans in Congress have refused to hold hearings on, mark up, debate, or vote on any legislation proposing a policy framework for economy-wide reductions in carbon pollution.

It is not just in Congress that the chamber wields its baleful influence; the chamber also fought climate action in the courts and at the executive branch. In fact, in 2010, the chamber sued the EPA to overturn the finding that greenhouse gas emissions endanger public health and welfare. You would think it would be obvious that they do. Look around, and you will see that they do. Disabling the endangerment finding would cripple the Agency's ability to regulate carbon pollution under the Clean Air Act, so off went the chamber.

When the courts rejected this lawsuit on the endangerment finding, then the chamber became central command for corporate lawyers, coal lobbyists, and Republican political strategists to devise legal schemes to fight climate regulations. This produced another chamber lawsuit to block the Clean Power Plan reducing carbon pollution from powerplants.

Of course, once President Trump took office, the chamber went from defense to offense and attacked many Obama administration rules limiting carbon pollution. The chamber even funded the phony report the Trump administration used to justify leaving the Paris accord.

Perhaps, worst of all, the Chamber has fought against science itself. It has proposed putting the evidence—the scientific evidence—of climate change on trial in what its own officials have branded the “Scopes monkey trial of the 21st century.” That is what this crowd was for. Indeed, the Chamber has said the trial “would be evolution versus creationism.” Guess what side it would be on.

This is not your hometown Chamber, folks.

The Chamber has even tried to limit the scientific studies that regulators could consider. The Chamber's evident target was public health studies that

demonstrate just how dangerous burning fossil fuels is to public health. The Chamber is an electioneering force, not just a lobbying force, and it spends massive sums in politics to shore up its control in Congress. Since the 2010 Citizens United decision has allowed outside groups to spend unlimited sums on electioneering activities, the Chamber has funneled, roughly, \$150 million into congressional races, which has made the Chamber the largest distributor of undisclosed donations—dark money, we call it—in congressional races.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask unanimous consent to speak for an additional 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the Presiding Officer. I appreciate that courtesy.

Blocking action on climate has been the central focus of the Chamber's campaign spending. It ran this ad in Pennsylvania in 2016. Two moms watch their children on a playground. One comments on how much energy the children have. The other says: Oh, don't say that. The candidate wants to tax that energy. The ad gets even weirder when a faceless woman arrives in a car and steps out toward the children. Alarmed, one of the mothers yells the ad's punch line: “Run, Jimmy. Run.” Classy stuff. I wonder who the Chamber was fronting for.

So how does the Chamber's anti-climate crusade square with its big corporate members?

It has members like Coke and Pepsi, which have good internal climate policies and websites that are full of commitments to reduce corporate carbon footprints, and they have signed letters on climate action.

Pepsi signed the Ceres BICEP Climate Declaration. Coke plans to reduce CO₂ emissions by 25 percent. It says it “will work to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions across its value chain, making comprehensive carbon footprint reductions across its manufacturing processes, packaging formats, delivery fleet, refrigeration equipment and ingredient sourcing.”

Yet both Coke and Pepsi fund the Chamber of Commerce, and they fund the American Beverage Association, which, in turn, runs more money to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The end result? Two companies that are actively reducing their carbon emissions and that enthusiastically support good climate policy have the position in Congress, via their funding of the Chamber, of opposing climate action here in Washington—the place where it really counts.

Verizon has reduced its carbon intensity by 28 percent since 2016, and its CEO has publicly stated Verizon's commitment to combat climate change. Yet Verizon, too, funds the Chamber's obstruction.

Then there is Google with its motto: “Don't be evil.” Google is warning its investors that climate change threatens its systems. It says that it is vulnerable to damage or interruption from natural disasters and to the effects of climate change, such as sea level rise, drought, flooding, wildfires, and increased storm severity. Google has signed pledges to fight climate change; yet Google, too, funds the Chamber's anti-climate crusade.

Coke, Pepsi, Verizon, and Google are just four examples among many. These companies say they support climate action but fund one of climate action's worst opponents.

Why does the Chamber put these members in this position? The best explanation I have is that the fossil fuel industry is secretly calling the shots at the Chamber; that is, it is secretly funding the Chamber. That would explain the Chamber's refusal to disclose its funders.

I think this is a governance issue now for these companies, particularly for those members who serve on the Chamber's board. Board members of nonprofit organizations have a common law duty of care. Not knowing who is funding your organization looks like a breach of that duty of care.

The Chamber's member companies need to ask themselves: Do we know who is funding the Chamber? Do we know how much each donor is giving? Do those donations explain the Chamber's years of obstruction?

The Chamber holds itself out as a business association. Another question: Why is it accepting money from non-businesses?

In 2012 and 2014, the Chamber took at least \$5.5 million from front groups that have been backed by the Koch brothers. In 2014, it took \$5.25 million from a front group that was affiliated with Karl Rove.

Did the Chamber's board members know this? Did they exercise the proper duty of care? Do they know what nonbusiness money is funding the Chamber these days? Do they know what percentage of the Chamber's funding comes secretly from fossil fuel interests?

I don't think the Chamber's board members know the answers to any of these questions.

Here is a question for the general counsel of these board member corporations: Should they know or are you going to go with willful ignorance? Good luck with that.

The bottom line is simple. Chamber board members with good climate policies are supporting one of the worst climate obstructors in America. Indeed, they are writing big checks to do so. This, I believe, is not just a moral problem but a governance problem. If these companies aren't asking these tough questions and if they are not pushing the Chamber to be transparent about its funding sources, they are answerable. Until this mess gets sorted out, in spite of all of corporate America's efforts to reduce emissions, its

funding of the “U.S. Chamber of Carbon” means that corporate America is doing more harm than good for our climate.

Again, I thank the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma for his courtesy in allowing me the extra time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, first of all, despite what some people might think, I have the highest regard for the Senator from Rhode Island.

It is very interesting in that the climate is changing, and the climate has always changed. All evidence out there—all historical evidence, all scriptural evidence—tells us over and over again that the climate is changing. It always has been changing, and it always will change.

The good news is that the world is not coming to an end because of climate change. That is because the climate is always changing. So, for those people who believe the world is coming to an end because of greenhouse gas emissions, the good news is it is not. I am happy to share that good news with you.

BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2019

Madam President, I am here to speak about some other good news, which is that we have an opportunity with a vote that is coming up. Some people call it the budget vote or the budget agreement. I don't refer to it as such. I call it a defense agreement. I think everybody knows where I stand on this. This is a vote that is going to have to come up before too long, and there is a unique group of people in the U.S. Senate who know the reason that we have to pass the defense budget. They are the members of the Senate's Committee on Armed Services. It happens that I chair that committee and that we have done really great work.

I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, we had a situation in which we went through an 8-year period of time when our military was somewhat devastated, and I want to share some of the specifics of that because it is a serious thing. We are going to be voting on the defense budget agreement, and I have already stated where I stand on it. I am here to outline why the budget agreement is necessary for our national defense.

This defense budget agreement will be able to focus on the Senate's Armed Services' top priorities, one of which is to fix the on-base privatization of military housing.

Remember that this happened about 6 months ago. We discovered, all of a sudden, that we were not doing a good job on our privatized housing. Hey, I have to admit that I am partly responsible for that because I was around here when we decided to privatize the

housing. It did work for a while. I think, after a period of time, people got a little careless, and there was a little slack. Some of the contractors who made that commitment got a little bit greedy. This information as to how bad the conditions were came from a person at Tinker Air Force Base who was the spouse of a military person. When I first heard this, I thought there were bad conditions just in my State of Oklahoma, but there were not; they were all over the Nation.

So we fixed that thing. We fixed it with our defense authorization bill, and we had a lot of provisions in there. We are now modernizing our military housing in a way that is going to be good for all of our spouses and others who are forced to live there. For some reason, if our defense budget agreement were to go down in flames and not be passed, there wouldn't be the modernizing of our military or the giving to our troops a well-deserved pay raise, and they have not had a pay raise in a long time. This is going to be the largest pay raise for our military people in the last 10 years. It is a good thing.

By the way, people are always talking about how we can be so concerned about building our military when we have China and Russia that have passed us up in many areas and spend just a fraction of the amount. The reason is very simple, which is that China and Russia are countries that don't have to do anything for their soldiers. We take care of ours. We try to provide good housing. We provide the types of things that our all-volunteer force can be very proud of and are very proud of. That is something we have to incur. The largest single expenditure that we have in the military is end strength—the people out there. Communist countries—China, Russia—don't have to worry about that. “Here is a gun. Go out and kill somebody.” We don't have that luxury, and we wouldn't do that if we wanted to.

If we don't pass this budget bill, the effects on the military will be devastating. Let me just share a couple of things that would happen.

We would force the Department of Defense to operate under a continuing resolution, which would shortchange our troops and waste taxpayer dollars. We all know that. We would face destructive, haphazard cuts in sequestration. What is it we hear on our committee? The Presiding Officer is fully familiar, for she is one of the most loyal members of the Senate's Committee on Armed Services. We have posture hearings for about 6 months at the beginning of every year with the leaders of the various branches of the military—General Votel, Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, ADM Craig Faller, ADM Phil Davidson, all of these people.

What do they tell us?

They tell us, if we don't actually start funding our military again, we are going to have sequestration. Look, if we vote for this thing and pass it, we

will end the sequestration problems and threats forever. It will not happen again.

What else do they tell us?

They tell us that a CR, which is a continuing resolution, would be an absolute disaster. A lot of people in this body don't know this, but every member of the Senate's Committee on Armed Services does know this because they were there.

All of these people—16 leaders—come in for posture hearings each year, and we know the problems we are having and the problems we are confronted with. We would be faced with cuts in sequestration.

This document right here is the “Assessment and Recommendations of the National Defense Strategy Commission.” Here it is right here. This is our blueprint of what we are doing to save America and to put us back on top in all of these areas in which we are deficient. If, for some reason, we don't pass this defense budget agreement, then we will not be able to continue the implementation of the national defense strategy, and we all know that. Certainly, we don't all know that, but the members of the Senate's Committee on Armed Services do know that.

So that is what would happen. But what would this mean? The members of the Armed Services Committee know what it means, but for everybody else, the deficit budget deal would end the threat of sequestration forever. You don't need me to tell you that sequestration would be devastating.

General Milley, just confirmed to be the Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, said that the levels of funding caused by sequestration would place America “at great risk.”

Remember, unfortunately, Heather Wilson, the former Air Force Secretary who had to leave her position. She said the cuts would be “absolutely devastating in scope and scale.”

If we were hit by sequestration, there would be an across-the-board cut of \$71 billion to the defense programs. That would halt our progress on the Space Command and developing crucial capabilities like hypersonic weapons and artificial intelligence. Those are two areas where we have actually been passed up by both Russia and China.

Just yesterday, the DARPA announced that they have completed a successful design review of a hypersonic weapons program. Now, that is a good first step. I am really glad because we were way ahead of them back before the last administration came into office, and then, all of a sudden, over that period of time, we got behind. So, meanwhile, China and Russia are already testing their hypersonic weapons, and they are ahead of us. We are just trying to catch up, and that is what this budget vote is all about.

The 2020 NDAA invests in hypersonic weapons, but we can't move forward if we are hit by sequestration. It would mean it would set us even further behind.