

Not a square inch of that is in Washington, DC. It is in the 12 Western States: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. It has never made sense for leadership to work 2,000 miles away from these States, insulated by the inevitably different perspectives of life inside the beltway. That is what is so important about this decision.

When you don't live in the communities that are among and surrounded by these lands, it is easy to make decisions that close off energy development or close cattle ranches and grazing opportunities, because the consequences are felt out west instead of in Washington, DC.

But this strong push by westerners—SCOTT TIPTON, myself, Secretary Zinke, and others—began the conversation about modernization and the organizational structure for the next 100 years of the Bureau of Land Management, and I appreciate Secretary Bernhardt's decision to make this happen.

Grand Junction, where the new BLM will be located, is an incredibly beautiful place, with people who are so supportive of this decision—a community that knows that when these decision makers are in their community, they are not going to have to drive hours or take a flight for 4 hours out of Washington to see BLM lands. Just to look out the window and to see the lands they manage will result in better decision making.

Mesa County, where Grand Junction is located, is the county seat. It is 73 percent Federal land, 46 percent of which is managed by the BLM. In total, the BLM manages 8.3 million acres of surface in Colorado and 27 million acres of Federal mineral estates in Colorado.

But we are not the only State that will benefit, obviously. There are a lot of other positions that will be moving across the country to the State and to the location where those jobs are a best fit. It makes sense.

I know sometimes people think that Washington is the only place where people can do government's work or where people can find the kind of skilled workforce. That is one of the arguments that has actually been made against the BLM move—that only Washington has the skilled workforce able to do these jobs.

Look, I am sorry, if you don't want to live in the counties and communities surrounded by public lands. Then, why are you working for a public land management agency?

So I am excited about this. I thank the good people with the Secretary of the Interior who made this decision happen and the community of Grand Junction, which supported this from day one.

In the same op-ed that Mr. Walcher wrote, he opened with a quote and said this: "There is something more powerful than the brute force of bayonets: It is the idea whose time has come."

That is where we have finally arrived today, an idea whose time has come, locating the decision makers who affect our western communities the most out in the western United States.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the opportunity to talk about this decision. I commend the Secretary of the Interior for doing what is right by our public lands, and I will continue to stand up for public lands throughout this process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE
REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, an unusual event occurred yesterday in the Environment and Public Works Committee—a major bill reauthorizing America's transportation infrastructure for 5 years passed the committee by a 21-to-0 vote. That is the way we should be able to operate on a subject that I think enjoys universal support in the Senate; that is, making sure the Federal partnership for infrastructure is not only reauthorized but also increased because we know the infrastructure needs of this country have only gotten more challenging.

I want to start by complimenting the leadership of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Chairman BARRASSO and Ranking Member CARPER worked very closely together on this bill, including the input of all members of the committee as well as Members of the Senate.

The Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure, chaired by Senator CAPITO, and I am the ranking Democrat on the committee, also worked very well in developing this Transportation Infrastructure Reauthorization Act.

As I pointed out originally, the needs are urgent, and the leadership of the committee recognized that. In every one of our States, we know the unmet needs of infrastructure, maintaining our existing infrastructure, and replacing our bridges that are falling down, dealing with our transit systems, dealing with the needs to deal with congestion.

We know there are so many issues out there, and it is important for us to give a clear signal that we intend to have a long-term reauthorization, 5 years, so there is predictability, so our States and local governments know that these projects that require longer term planning will have a Federal partner that is available and reliable.

It also increases the funding, the first year by 10 percent and increases it by certain percentages thereafter, recognizing we need to do more. There are several new initiatives building on existing programs that I think are worthy of mentioning.

Let me just go over a few of the real highlights of this infrastructure bill. First, it has a climate change title. This is the first time we have done this—a separate title to deal with the realities of climate change.

I need only remind my colleagues of what happened this month in Maryland when we had 4 inches of rain that flooded Maryland roads. We have to deal with the realities. We have to deal with resiliency and adaptation in regard to what is happening with climate change. This title deals with that.

Transportation is the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions. We need infrastructure that deals with the realities of reducing carbon emissions. This title provides for financial help for building an infrastructure for electric and alternative fuel vehicles. That is a reality of consumer desire as well as dealing with the realities of climate change.

We give local discretion for funds to initiate emission reduction strategies. That could include simple things like providing alternatives for the use of our cars for people who want to walk and bike rather than having to get into their cars. It is a major commitment for which we are going to provide resources, in partnership with local governments, to deal with the realities of our responsibility in the transportation sector to reduce carbon emissions.

We also deal with the realities of congestion. I can tell the Presiding Officer, as I told my colleagues on the Environment and Public Works Committee, that I face it every day twice a day. I commute from Baltimore here to work and have to deal with the realities of congestion.

It has been estimated that the delays caused by congestion and the excessive fuels that are used by congestion cost our economy over \$300 billion every year. So there is not only a quality-of-life issue involved in our taking on congestion, there is also an economic reason to take on the issues of congestion.

Of course, it is also linked to our commitment to deal with the climate change issues by reducing unnecessary fuel consumption, which adds to carbon emissions.

The legislation provides funding for new initiatives so that we can get solutions to deal with the problems of congestion, the multimodal solutions that are available in many communities. We work and allow the locals to give us ideas and help fund those to reduce congestion.

As I mentioned earlier, we have a real challenge on dealing with our bridges. Many of our bridges are in need of replacement. Many are in need of desperate repair. I can mention many in Maryland. In the southern part of our State, we have the Nice Bridge and the Johnson Bridge, both in need of replacement or repair. This legislation provides additional resources to deal with bridges in our country.

There are certain highways that have been built that no longer really serve the function—or may never serve the function—of moving people from one area to another but instead are dividing communities. So the legislation

has a unique section that allows us to identify those types of highways that are no longer needed and that are dividing and isolating communities so we can get those highways removed.

I am proud that this legislation builds on the Transportation Alternative Program that I helped author on the reauthorization bill with my partner Senator WICKER. I thank him for his help. It allows for much more local discretion on how transportation funds are spent. It allows local communities to have a source of Federal support to deal with local safety issues, for developing trails for pedestrian and bike paths so that the quality of life and safety of the local community are taken into consideration on the use of Federal highway funds.

It provides flexibility to local government. In the first year, we provide \$1.2 billion for transportation alternative programs with a steady growth in the ensuing 4 years.

I also want to acknowledge the section in the bill that deals with freight traffic. It is a growing field. We expect it to continue to grow. There are funds that are provided in here to deal with the realities of moving freight through our highway surface transportation system.

In that regard, I was pleased that this past week we were able to announce an INFRA grant for Maryland of \$125 million for the Howard Street Tunnel. This is a tunnel that is 120 years old and runs through Baltimore. The replacement of this tunnel will allow for double stacking of rail freight, which is what you need to do today if you are going to have efficiency and be economically competitive. This grant will help us replace that tunnel and help create more jobs in Baltimore, in Maryland, and in our entire region of the country and will provide for more efficiencies on truck traffic.

I say that because, today, because of the inefficiencies of rail, we have trucks that are stacked up in the Port of Baltimore, which is inefficient for the truck operators and, again, adds to the climate problems of excessive use of fuels.

There is a section in here that deals with safety, as we should. In 2017, 37,000 people died in our transportation areas. We need to improve that. There are some important provisions in this legislation that deal with safety issues.

The bill also deals with reauthorizing the Appalachian Regional Commission. I particularly thank Senator CAPITO for her leadership on this issue. Reauthorization is important for the entire region, including the western part of the State of Maryland.

This is the first step—and I hope a successful step—for the completion of the reauthorization of surface transportation by this Congress before the end of this year. I hope we can get it moving. I hope we can get it enacted, certainly, in time, so there is no lapse in Federal partnerships dealing with transportation.

I know we have other committees that need to act on a comprehensive transportation bill. Many of us serve on those other committees. If we follow the example of the Environment and Public Works Committee—21 to 0—if we listen to each other, if we do that, we can succeed in passing a strong reauthorization of surface transportation that will help modernize America's transportation needs, which will be good for our economy, good for our environment, and good for the quality of life of all Americans.

I urge my colleagues to follow that example, and let's get this work done.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic whip.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as those who are following on C-SPAN have probably noted, we are not overwhelmed with business on the floor of the U.S. Senate, nor have we been during the course of this year.

We have considered several bills—you could count them on one hand—including the Defense authorization bill, and, of course, the momentous, historic legislation 2 weeks ago, the tax treaty with Luxembourg, which had been pending before the U.S. Senate for 9 years. It finally made it to the floor of the Senate. That was the highlight of the week, as we have watched the U.S. Senate ignore some of the most important issues of our time.

Let me tell you one that strikes at the heart of our democracy, which we should be focused on today and until it is resolved. Last week, former FBI Director and Special Counsel Bob Mueller testified before the House Judiciary Committee about his report on Russian interference in the 2016 election. The hearing clarified several important things. For example, President Trump loves to claim that the Mueller report completely exonerated him. Trump's tweets, one after another, talk about how he was exonerated by that report. Director Mueller made clear that is "not what the report said."

When asked by the House Judiciary chairman "Did you actually totally exonerate the President?" Director Mueller answered "no."

President Trump likes to say the Mueller investigation was a witch hunt. He has said that about 1,000 times. But the investigation actually led to 37 indictments and over \$42 million in assets forfeited to the government. If this were a witch hunt, it certainly found a lot of wealthy witches.

Some Republican members of the House Judiciary Committee tried to attack Director Mueller's credibility, but Mueller has a lifetime record of being a straight shooter, by-the-book investigator, and prosecutor. He did this country a service when he took on the role of special counsel.

One thing Director Mueller tried to remind the American people of is the reason the investigation was necessary. He said:

Over the course of my career, I have seen a number of challenges to our democracy. The Russian government's effort to interfere in our election is among the most serious.

Mueller went on to say: "This deserves the attention of every American."

One of the most important takeaways from the Mueller report is that Russia did successfully attack our democracy in 2016. Page 1 of the Mueller report says: "The Russian Government interfered in the 2016 presidential election in sweeping and systematic fashion."

The report detailed numerous examples, including an "intelligence-gathering mission" that employees of the Internet Research Agency, known as the IRA, took in June of 2014.

The IRA was the Russian troll farm that waged information warfare against the 2016 election by using stolen identities, fake social media accounts, and fake campaign events.

The Mueller report and the earlier indictment of several IRA employees noted that two of the Russians arrived in the United States for a 3-week trip "for the purpose of collecting intelligence to inform the [IRA's] operations."

The report also detailed the Russians' attack on my own home State board of elections. In July 2016, the Illinois State board of elections discovered that it was the target of a malicious, month-long cyber attack that enabled the intruder to access confidential voter information and view the registration data of approximately 76,000 voters in my State of Illinois.

These efforts to influence the election and attack campaign organizations and State and local election administrators and vendors continue to this day. What are we going to do about it?

What has been the response so far of the U.S. Senate, the body sworn to uphold the Constitution and to protect against enemies, foreign and domestic? Nothing. We are too busy with the trade treaty with Luxembourg to deal with Russian interference in our elections. In the face of Russia's threat to our elections, this Senate has been quiet as a graveyard.

Let's start in 2016. Top officials from the administration's national security and intelligence community came and warned congressional leadership of Russia's ongoing attack on our elections, rightly asking for a bipartisan statement to tell Russian dictator Putin to stop. What was Senate Majority Leader McCONNELL's response to this obvious request to protect our Nation? He said: No thanks. I am not going to do it.

History will no doubt look back in infamy at that decision.

What about the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a historically recognized body with key jurisdiction over Russian attacks on the United States? That committee did not even conduct an investigation into Russia's actions in the last Congress.