

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Urging the Congress of the United States to pass legislation reauthorizing the federal highway program by May 1, 1998.

WHEREAS, a safe and efficient highway system is essential to the nation's international competitiveness, key to domestic productivity, and vital to our quality of life; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota has critical highway investment needs that cannot be addressed with current financial resources. The South Dakota Department of Transportation rates two thousand four hundred nine miles of South Dakota's most important roads in either poor or fair condition and judges one hundred forty-eight of our bridges to be structurally deficient or functionally obsolete; and

WHEREAS, the current level of federal funding for the nation's highway system is inadequate to meet rehabilitation needs, to protect the safety of the traveling public, to begin solving congestion and rural access problems, to conduct adequate transportation research, and to keep the United States competitive in a global economy; and

WHEREAS, the federal highway program is financed by dedicated user fees collected from motorists to improve the highway system and deposited in the federal Highway Trust Fund. The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1998 transferred all federal motor fuel taxes into the Highway Trust Fund but provided no mechanism to ensure the funds are spent; and

WHEREAS, the 1998 congressional budget would constrain federal highway spending well below the level of highway tax receipts, allowing the Highway Trust Fund's cash balance to grow from just over twenty-two billion dollars today to more than seventy billion dollars by 2003; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota and other states will be prohibited from obligating any federal highway funds after April 30, 1998, unless Congress and the President enact new highway legislation by that date; and

WHEREAS, without federal highway funds, many states will be forced to delay life-saving safety improvements, congestion relief projects, and other road and bridge improvements:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Senate of the Seventy-third Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the House of Representatives concurring therein, the South Dakota Legislature urges the United States Congress to enact legislation reauthorizing the federal highway program by May 1, 1998; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the reauthorization bill shall fund the federal highway program at the highest level that the user-financed Highway Trust Fund will support.

Adopted by the Senate,
Concurred in by the House of Representatives,

February 23, 1998
February 25, 1998

Carole Hillard
President of the Senate

Patricia Adam
Secretary of the Senate

Rex Hagg
Speaker of the House

Karen Gerdes
Chief Clerk of the House