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REMARKS BY PRESIDENT TRUMP
IN MEETING WITH STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS
ON INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE

State Dining Room

11:03 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Thank you, everybody. Sit.

It's a great honor to have everybody with us, and we have some very exciting things to be talking about, things you've been waiting for for a long time, for many, many years. And now, let's see how badly you want it. (Laughter.) Because if you want it badly, you're going to get it. And if you don't want it, that's okay with me too.

But we have to rebuild our infrastructure. You know, I said this morning, as of a couple of months ago, we have spent \$7 trillion in the Middle East -- \$7 trillion. What a mistake. But it is what it is. This is what I took over.

And we're trying to build roads and bridges, and fix bridges that are falling down. And we have a hard time getting the money. It's crazy.

But think of that. As of a couple of months ago, \$7 trillion in the Middle East. And the Middle East is far worse now than it was 17 years ago when they went in -- and not so intelligently, I have to say -- went in. I'm being nice. So it's a very sad thing.

The budget was recently passed, and the reason it was passed is because of our military. Our military was totally depleted, and we will have a military like we've never had

before. We're going to have an incredible military. And to me, that means a couple of things.

Number one, it does mean jobs. But, really, number one, it means safety and security. Because without the military -- and we may have very strong views on spending, which I have -- but without the military, it's possible there's no reason for us to be meeting. Maybe we wouldn't be here.

So we're going to have the strongest military we've ever had, by far. We're increasing arsenals of virtually every weapon. We're modernizing and creating brand new -- a brand new nuclear force. And, frankly, we have to do it because others are doing it. If they stop, we'll stop. But they're not stopping. So if they're not going to stop, we're going to be so far ahead of everybody else in nuclear like you've never seen before.

And I hope they stop. And if they do, we'll stop in two minutes. And, frankly, I'd like to get rid of a lot of them. And if they want to do that, we'll go along with them. We won't lead the way. We'll go along with them.

But we will have a nuclear force that will be absolutely modernized and brand new. And hopefully we'll never have to use it, and hopefully we can reduce it in the years ahead. And that depends, really, on what other people are going to be doing. But we will always be number one in that category. Certainly, as long as I'm President, we're going to be far, far in excess of anybody else.

I'm honored to be here with the governors, with county executives, and mayors from around the country. Secretary Chao, Secretary Zinke, Secretary Ross, Administrator Pruitt, thank you for joining us. I greatly appreciate it.

We're here today to discuss the critical need to rebuild America's crumbling infrastructure. And one understands, and the people in this room really understand better than most -- probably, hopefully, better than anybody -- that the problem that the states have and local leaders have with funding the infrastructure is horrendous. And we will build, we will maintain.

And the vast majority of Americans want to see us take care of our infrastructure. Trucking companies are complaining that they used to take trucks from Los Angeles to New York, and there

was no damage. Now they bring from Los Angeles to New York, and there's tremendous damage to their trucks because our roads are in bad shape. And we're going to get the roads in great shape.

And very important, we're going to make our infrastructure modernized. And we're really way behind schedule. We're way behind other countries. We always led the way for many, many years. Then, a number of decades ago, it slowed down, and over the last 8 years, and 15 years to be honest, it's come to a halt.

This morning, I submitted legislative principles to Congress that will spur the biggest and boldest infrastructure investment in American history. The framework will generate an unprecedented \$1.5- to \$1.7-trillion investment in American infrastructure. We're going to have a lot of public-private. That way it gets done on time, on budget.

It will speed the permit approval process from 10 years to 2 years, and maybe even to 1 year. Because when we give U.S. governors and mayors, and people representing your great states -- when we give you money and you can't get your approvals, I guess we're going to have to take that money back, or you're not going to build.

And some of you are sitting around the table that I know, some of the governors, you're going to get those permits. I have no doubt. Others, I see a couple sitting around the table; I don't think they're going to get their permits so fast. But you're going to have to get it. Otherwise, you're not going to be able to build because we can't give you money and you're going to take 15 years to get a permit. In one state, it took 17 years for a basic roadway to get a permit, and the cost was many, many, many times what it was supposed to be. And we can't have that. So we want you to get going, and you'll work on the permitting process.

And from a federal standpoint, environmentally and everything we have to do -- I see Scott is here -- we're going to get your permits very quickly.

It provides \$50 billion for rural infrastructure, who have really been left out -- the rural folks have been left out, including broadband Internet access, which they don't have. And they want it, and the farmers want it. It will create thousands and thousands of jobs, and increase training for our great

American workers, and it returns power to the state and local governments who know best what their people need.

Washington will no longer be a roadblock to progress. Washington will now be your partner. We'll be your partner. A lot of money -- up to \$1.7 trillion. That's bigger than people thought. And we're going to have a lot of great people working. We're going to also have great companies investing and building, and they'll build for you because sometimes the states aren't able to do it like we can do it, or like other people can do it, or like I used to do it.

When I did the Wollman Rink, it was 7 years, they couldn't get it built. It would have been forever. They couldn't get it built. And I did it in a few months at a much smaller price. They had invested \$12 million in building an ice skating rink in the middle of Central Park. Somebody told me about this the other day; they've never forgotten it. It was a big deal at the time. It remains a big deal. It took many, many years, and they were unable to open it. And I said, you know, I'd like to be able to have my daughter Ivanka, who is with us -- I'd like to be able to have her go ice skating sometime before she doesn't want to ice skate. (Laughter.) And I got involved. And I did it in a few months, and we did it for a tiny fraction -- tiny fraction of the cost.

And it's really no different with a roadway. It's no different with a bridge or tunnel, or any of the things that we'll be fixing.

The returns of money and investment to the states and local government will be incredible. And nobody knows better than you people where you want the money invested. That's the other thing. For the federal government to say, "Gee, this is what we want you to do in Wisconsin, Scott" -- you know exactly where you want to do it. And you've done a great job, by the way. But you know exactly where that money is going.

And how is your new company that's opening up there doing, by the way? Are they doing okay? That was a big one. Foxconn, that's moving along, right? They make the Apple iPhone. And I said for a long time, I said, I want those companies to be making their product here. And they went to Wisconsin. Scott did a fantastic job, a presentation. I actually saw a site that I loved. I said, that was an old auto site. And I was with the head of Foxconn -- great man, actually; great businessman. Incredible. And I said, that's a great site for

you, right in Wisconsin. And I hear that's where they're going. So you've done a fantastic job.

But this is a commonsense and bipartisan plan that every member of Congress should support. I look forward to working with them, and we're going to get the American people roads that are fixed and bridges that are fixed. And if for any reason they don't want to support it, hey, that's going to be up to them.

What was very important to me was the military. What was very important to me was the tax cuts. And what was very important to me was regulation. This is of great importance, but it's not nearly in that category because the states will have to do it themselves if we don't do it. But I would like to help the states out, and we're doing that with a very big investment.

One of the other things I think so important to mention is that, in the budget, we took care of the military like it's never been taken care of before. In fact, General Mattis called me; he goes, "Wow, I can't believe I got everything we wanted." I said, that's right, but we want no excuses. We want you to buy twice, okay? Twice what you thought for half the price. (Laughter.) So maybe we're going to get involved a little bit in the buying. We want to get twice as many planes for half the price. And believe me, we can do a lot because the procurement process is very outdated, to put it nicely. But we're going to have something very special.

But one of the things that was very important to me with respect to the budget was DACA. I did not want DACA in the budget. I wanted DACA separate so that we could talk about it and make a deal. And I hope to be able to make a deal. I hope the Democrats are not going to use it just as a campaign. You know, they've been talking about DACA for many years, and they haven't produced. We started talking about DACA, and I think we'll produce.

But if the Democrats want to make a deal, it's really up to them, because we want really tremendous border security, but we have to have Democrat support for DACA, and they are starting that process today. We didn't want to have it in the big budget, because if we have it in the big budget, it's going to get mixed up with all of the other things.

So now we have our military taken care of, and now we start very serious DACA talks today. And we are -- I can tell you, speaking for the Republican Party, we would love to do DACA. We would love to get it done. We want border security and the other elements that you know about. Chain migration, you know about. The visa lottery, you know about. But we think there's a good chance of getting DACA done if the Democrats are serious and they actually want to do it.

But they didn't want tax cuts. They fought -- we didn't get one vote for massive tax cuts that have turned out to be unbelievably popular. And what came up -- which was even a surprise to us -- were, the big companies stepped up, and millions and millions of people have gotten tremendous bonuses. Nobody knew that was going to happen. That was a -- that was just the beginning point.

So we didn't get one Democrat vote -- not one -- for the biggest -- and I think that's a big political problem for them, if you want to know the truth. They are going around saying they made a mistake, because the tax cuts have now -- you see what's going on; it's spurred the economy. Unemployment is at virtually record lows. Black unemployment is at the lowest level in history. Hispanic unemployment is at the lowest level in recorded history, which is really something that's so great. And we are very, very -- it's amazing what's been going on with the economy.

And I just want to end by saying it's an honor to have all of you with us. We're going to have a few of you make statements, and then we'll all stay around.

If you want, we can leave the press or we can have the press leave immediately. I'll leave that up to Scott Walker, because you're going to be the first speaker. (Laughter.) So, Scott, do you want to say a few words?

GOVERNOR WALKER: Sure.

THE PRESIDENT: And thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

GOVERNOR WALKER: Well, first off, Mr. President, I think, on behalf of all of us -- all the state and local leaders, both Republican and Democrat alike -- thank you to you and your administration for hosting us all today. Before you came in, we

were having a good, lively discussion about answering some of the questions many of us had.

You alluded to, a moment ago, Foxconn, which you were great to help us announce here. As I mentioned to many of the folks assembled here today, for the first time ever, LCD panels, the kind of panels here -- in the future, they'll be even bigger -- made by Sharp, will be made in the United States. And we're proud that they're going to be made in the state of Wisconsin. About a \$10 billion investment. We're helping with about \$3 billion worth of incentives.

And when we think about infrastructure, it ties into that, as it does all over the state of Wisconsin. In the last few years, through this recent budget, we've made about a \$24 billion investment in our state in the transportation infrastructure. That's about \$3 billion more than the previous eight years. And so we understand what you're trying to do here.

But one of those projects that will help there is -- it's about a \$1.5 [billion], almost \$1.6 billion transportation project. Interstate 94, from the state line through Kenosha, Racine counties, all the way up to our largest county, Milwaukee County. We've completed a good chunk of that. I think 13 of the 19 interchanges have been completed; about half of the miles have been done.

But there's one major portion, right by where they're going to build this new \$10 billion ecosystem that we're still working on. The state, most recently, in our budget, put about a quarter of a billion dollars on top of all the money that's been spent up until now. And we think, through the help of the federal government, with the Infrastructure for America funding, that we can finish off the rest.

And get this -- the good part is, the local roads that we're helping out with in additional money beyond that is being done in about eight months' time. And we believe on the time schedule we're on, the remainder of that can be done in less than two years, with the ideal completion date being before the fall of 2020 --

THE PRESIDENT: Fantastic.

GOVERNOR WALKER: -- a date I'm sure you're interested in. That would be completed by that time. And we're thrilled,

and we think it's a good example of a good partnership between the federal, the state, and local governments.

And I just would add, when you were coming in, my friend from Iowa was just talking about rural infrastructure and rural interest. And I also want to say -- because we got a good portion of state that is rural as well -- not only thank you on a rural initiative for transportation, but particularly for broadband. We'd love to have -- whether it's white spaces, fiber networks, you name it -- there's plenty of opportunities for us to grow and expand our Internet capacities all throughout the United States.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's been very unfair what's happened with broadband in terms of the Midwest and in terms, really, of rural areas, as you know. And you, sort of, were a victim of it, too. But now it's going to be taken care of. We're spending a great deal of money on that. It's only fair. And they want it. They want it. They know how to use it. They want it. And we're going to get it.

How many jobs will be created because of Foxconn's new plant?

GOVERNOR WALKER: About 35,000 in total; 13,000 direct and another 22,000 indirect or induced. That's bigger than -- just the direct jobs alone, 13,000 -- talking about rural -- is bigger than 96 percent of all the municipalities in the state of Wisconsin.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a fantastic thing. Everybody wanted Foxconn. Frankly, they weren't going to come to this country. I hate to say it, if I didn't get elected, they wouldn't be in this country. They would not have done this in this country. I think you know that very well.

Just out of curiosity, 25,000, 35,000 jobs -- it's a tremendous -- one of the biggest economic development jobs in the country. How will you go about training and getting all of those people to work there?

GOVERNOR WALKER: Well, the first phase is, even before those jobs, is they're up to 10,000 construction jobs. So it fits in with exactly what you're talking about today. We'll have people all throughout our state and probably adjoining states. We made a major investment.

And I think part of one of the visits, Ivanka, you had made to one of our technical colleges -- we have all of our technical colleges in the state are stepping up their program specifically to train. Because this is not only for construction, but then for high-tech advanced manufacturing. This is going to be a whole new wave for us.

So we hope to have people not only in state being trained; we're trying to recruit people from other states as well.

THE PRESIDENT: And the company will also train, I understand.

GOVERNOR WALKER: Absolutely. They'll be bringing people in from around the world.

THE PRESIDENT: That's so exciting, Scott. Congratulations. You really did -- they told me the other day that you were really, really great. The state, Wisconsin, I'm not surprised. But they did a great job, and you did a great job. Thank you very much.

GOVERNOR SCOTT: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Adding to that, as you know, Apple -- I told Tim Cook during the campaign, before I was elected -- I said, Tim, you know, I don't know if I'm going to make it or not, but if I do, you got to build plants, you got to build some big plants. I won't consider this a great success unless I see those big plants that I see all over China and other places, but, in particular, China -- hopefully, you're going to build them here.

And he gave us a very big surprise two weeks ago -- \$350 billion -- not million. \$350 million would have been a nice plant too. But he's going to invest \$350 billion, of which he's taking \$245 billion back. And that's the money we talked about coming back into this country.

I think it's going to be about \$4 trillion. It was \$2.5 trillion, but I've been using that number for years, so I know the number has gotten larger. It's probably four. It could even be more than that. But a lot of it is coming back. Another company just announced they're bringing billions of dollars back into the country.

But Apple is bringing about \$240 billion back in. They're going to build a tremendous campus. They're going to build new plants. And it is beyond anything that anybody thought even possible. So that's very exciting. And you add that on to Foxconn, it's a whole different world out there.

So, Scott, thank you very much,

Governor Martinez, I would like to have you talk about some of the great strides that you've made in New Mexico, and what we're doing, and some of the things that are happening, because that's a very exciting state, what's going on. Thank you.

GOVERNOR MARTINEZ: Thank you, Mr. President. First, I'd like to start by thanking you for all that you've done, and including our states, through our mayors and governors and commissioners, to be a part of the conversation. It was certainly something that did not exist in the previous administration.

And because of that, we are at the table and able to give our different ideas and how they impact our states. So I'm very, very grateful for that -- for you and your willingness to allow us to participate.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

GOVERNOR MARTINEZ: I also know that the tax reform that has taken place is bringing millions of dollars more into our state, and with that comes the economic growth. And our economic growth -- for example, we have just brought Facebook to New Mexico. Keep in mind, New Mexico is a 2.1 million population. And to bring Facebook and the investment that they have brought, with a thousand construction jobs -- and of course have been preparing for those additional jobs with our community colleges and our two-year institutions and vocational school, so that making sure that the workforce was prepared to take on that number.

Also, as you know, New Mexico is a very big piece of our national security, as well as, we have natural resources, energy resources in New Mexico. And so our infrastructure is super important because we have what used to be two-lane highways -- for the amount of what we were developing in our energy sector, as well as our military bases and our national labs -- now are requiring four lanes and possibly turning lanes, because there's so much traffic because the energy in the southeast and

northwest part of our state is so big and booming that we have private vehicles going and merging into those traffic. And, unfortunately, right now, it can be very dangerous.

And also, we have the Waste Infrastructure Program down in the southeastern part of the state bringing transuranic waste from the northern part of the state to the southeastern part of the state. And again, those very large trucks that are traveling on very narrow roads, along with the public.

And so, again, thank you for including us --

THE PRESIDENT: Great job.

GOVERNOR MARTINEZ: -- so that we can be a big part of that.

Our funding has certainly been private, public, and national infrastructure dollars coming together. We've been insisting on that for the last seven years because we don't want a single source of funding taking care of our needs. And so we are constantly asking, when there is a project to be put together, what is the city putting in; county putting in; private sector putting in; federal putting in; state putting in so that together we can begin a project and complete it.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, great job you've done.

GOVERNOR MARTINEZ: Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And say hello to the people of New Mexico. They've been terrific.

GOVERNOR MARTINEZ: I will. Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, Susana.

One of the things we're doing, a little bit separate from this meeting but it all sort of amounts to the same thing, is a reciprocal tax. We are going to charge countries outside of our country -- countries that take advantage of the United States. Some of them are so-called "allies," but they're not allies on trade. They'll send in their product, and we won't charge them anything. And we send them our product -- same product as they're sending us -- and they'll charge us 50 and 75 percent tax, and that's very unfair.

One of the examples, Scott, is Harley Davidson. They're treated very unfairly in various countries. You know the countries I'm talking about. So we're going to be doing very much a reciprocal tax. And you'll be hearing about that during the week and during the coming months.

But not fair when we're taken advantage of. That's why we have these big trade deficits. That's why we have tremendous problems with trade. We're, as you know, renegotiating NAFTA now. I always said, we're either going to renegotiate it or terminate it. We're renegotiating. Bob Lighthizer is doing a fantastic job on that. And hopefully the renegotiation will be successful. And if it's not, we'll be more successful.

But NAFTA has been -- we lose a tremendous amount of money, at least \$71 billion a year with Mexico. We lose a lot of money with Canada. Canada does not treat us right in terms of the farming and the crossing the borders. So they'll either treat us right or we'll just have to do business a little bit -- really differently.

We cannot continue to be taken advantage of by other countries. We cannot continue to let people come into our country and rob us blind, and charge us tremendous tariffs and taxes, and we charge them nothing. We cannot allow that to happen. We cannot allow it to happen.

And we lose vast amounts of money with China and Japan and South Korea and so many other countries. And they understand where I'm coming from. I've talked to all of them and they understand it. It's a little tough for them, because they've gotten away with murder for 25 years. But we're going to be changing policy. And, you know, we have an incredible country but we can't let that happen. And it's really affecting our workers. It's affecting everything.

So that's going to be a very big part of what's happening over the next month. Everything is related to this meeting, but I wanted to mention that specifically.

I'd like to have County Commissioner Bovo of Miami-Dade say a few words. And a lot of progress being made there also.

MR. BOVO: Thank you, Mr. President. And you would appreciate, knowing Miami-Dade the way you do, the gridlock that we are experiencing. Gridlock could be one of the biggest detractors to economic investment.

Miami-Dade County has embarked in its Miami SMART Plan. That's #MiamiSMARTPlan, for those that follow. We're trying to be very aggressive. We've not only decided to put skin in the game -- we levied a halfpenny -- we've also created TIF legislation that allows us to create transit-oriented development, address the workforce housing issues; it addresses resiliency issues.

Our biggest concern, Mr. President, quite honestly, is that the environmental regulatory process really delays our ability to deliver projects. And I'll tell you what I consider a horror story. Many of the corridors that we are examining now that we'd like to develop transit -- expand our transit system, have been studied since 1970.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

MR. BOVO: Mr. President, I was in elementary school at the time that this was being talked about in my county. We have grave concern.

And I represent an area full of laborers. And I wonder, at times, what does the gridlock do to them. That construction man, that plumber, that carpenter who loses jobs because he can't get to all five appointments; he only gets to three. And those other two go to somebody else. (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to get you -- we're going to get you the federal permits, okay? And we're going to get you the environmental and the transportation permits. We'll get them for you so fast your head will spin.

The question is, are you going to be able to get the local permits. Because that's going to be up to you.

MR. BOVO: Mr. President, our Board of County Commission, our mayor, our governor in the state of Florida, and every elected official has now bought into the fact that we cannot allow projects to be delayed four or five years.

I said this earlier when we were meeting here as a group privately: It seems to me that the pyramids in Egypt were built faster than some of the projects that we're contemplating.

THE PRESIDENT: No, you wait 25 years on some. We have projects on the books that -- 25 years. Look at the pipelines,

how long they would have been. I approved them in the first week. And they're now being built. I guess you have one situation that's going to be solved very soon. But they're very -- you know, 48,000 jobs -- the two big pipelines.

They were dead. They were going to be dead for years. They were probably never going to happen. And environmentally, it's better to have it underground. It's better than using trains and using trucks all over the place. So it's -- we can do it.

But they have people waiting for 25 years for permits. And, by the way, 25 years and 100 times the original cost, if you think about it.

So we're going to get you the federal permits, we're going to get you the environmental permits that you need on a federal basis. It's very important that the local communities, like Miami-Dade and all -- and I know Miami-Dade very well, and it's great. These are great people. But you're right, it's very tied up. You'll be able to produce them locally.

And if you can't, then the money goes to somebody else. Because if you can't get your permit, you have a certain area -- I know Phil Bryant is going to get all of his permits. I have no doubt about that, right? You will have no problem. I know that.

But if you can't get your permits, and you can't get them quickly, the money is going to go to somebody else. Because we're not going to sit around for eight years because you're having a local dispute. So I think that's good. I think that's a good incentive.

MR. BOVO: Mr. President, today is my daughter's birthday, and this is serious enough that I'm here today to make sure that we get our end done. I'll be home in time to say happy birthday.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you're going to -- I know you. You're going to get it done.

MR. BOVO: Yeah, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Okay? Good. Thank you very much.

Phil, do you have anything to say?

GOVERNOR BRYANT: Hello, Mr. President. Thank you. And you're sitting next to my favorite mayor, George Flaggs of Vicksburg, Mississippi, so I better talk about his intermodal port. Because about 30 miles away, Continental Tires built him one of, if not the most advanced plant in the United States. It was the Plant of the Year in the Southeast. We won a Gold Shovel. I could tell you more about that. 2,500 employees are going to be there.

So ports are critically important. A hundred and fifty-five miles away from Jackson, our port of Gulfport was totally destroyed by Katrina. In August of 2005, a 28-foot surge completely destroyed the port. We are rebuilding it now. We've got \$300 million. HUD has been kind enough to allow us to put \$300 million into it. It is a remarkable, vibrant plant now -- port.

But we've got to have that Highway 49, which is unfortunately a farm road. It is a narrow, dangerous road with 69 -- 59 red lights between Jackson and the most dynamic port, I believe, in the Gulf. And so we're going to widen that, make it a great, big, beautiful highway --

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

GOVERNOR BRYANT: -- so people can get their goods and services to the port of the future. We've got a \$3.4 billion energy project planned in the future for the port. We've going to put a broadband crescent around the port for new technologies for Keesler's Air Force Base for manufacturing of 70 percent of the Navy's warships right there.

THE PRESIDENT: How are you doing with the permitting? How is that going?

GOVERNOR BRYANT: We've had not one problem. After Katrina, we were able to compress that permit time. And thanks to the EPA now -- now, we had to live eight years with a pretty difficult time.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, under the other administration, you would have been 20 years on the project you're talking about.

GOVERNOR BRYANT: I understand. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now you'll be about two months.

GOVERNOR BRYANT: But after this past year, with the great help of your team, it's been remarkable what's happening. We've not fully recovered from Katrina. Then the spill came along. But this new plan is going to be, really, the catalyst that will change states like Mississippi, move us to that new level. We're the mother of all rural states, so as we talk about rural investment, it is something that warms our hearts.

So I want to thank you, Mr. President. This is going to be -- I know the dynamic effort that you're going to put in it, and your team and all of us working together, is going to be generational. I hope, a hundred years from now they're thinking about the day that we were in this room and what happened this day.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Phil, I just left Mississippi, and I was with Phil recently at the African American Museum. And I want to tell you, the job you've done is incredible. And I hear it's doing record business. It's doing fantastically well. We were there for the ribbon cutting and the opening.

But the job you're doing in Mississippi is very inspiring to a lot of people. So congratulations, Phil.

GOVERNOR BRYANT: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: George, would you like to say a few words?

MAYOR FLAGGS: Thank you, Mr. President. I'm just glad that you allowed a guy from Vicksburg, Mississippi to be in a room with -- representing 20,000 people, and then we talk about a company going to his state with 35,000 people. But the governors already spoke to our situation as applied to our port.

But the other thing is that we need some relief on our infrastructure as it relates to our water treatment plants -- our water plant. The court decree draining us. So small-town municipalities -- and I think I speak for most municipalities -- the infrastructure -- this money couldn't come in no better time to help us develop through economic development and creation of jobs. This the thing that I like about it -- is it's creating jobs. And hopefully, in the next four or five months, we can get unemployment below 4 percent. And thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much, George. I appreciate it. You're doing a good job. Elaine, what would you like to say? Transportation, it's -- a lot of this money is going to transportation, so you become the big power that you always are. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY CHAO: Mr. President, your Cabinet members have been working very diligently over the last year. We have EPA Administrator Pruitt here. We have Secretary Zinke. We have Secretary Ross. And we have a plan that will fix the crumbling infrastructure, and we look forward to getting to work.

THE PRESIDENT: All right, thank you, Elaine. And, Scott Pruitt, could you talk about the environment and how we maintain a perfect, clean, better-than-ever environment, at the same time go quickly?

ADMINISTRATOR PRUITT: Mr. President, as the mayor just said from Vicksburg, you said Washington will now be a partner. And I think he hit on an area that's very important, and that's water infrastructure. When you think about safe drinking water in this country, small towns, counties across this country need investment with respect to their water treatment facilities. And this is a major part of the package.

I want to echo what Governor Bryant said earlier. We are looking at permitting at the EPA. By the end of 2018, we will process every permit, up or down, within six months. And that, combined with the changes we're making with this legislation to have an outside time period of two years, is radically going to transform how we see investment through this package.

So your leadership has been extraordinary, Mr. President. And the Cabinet has worked very well putting this package together.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much. And I know that when we're finished with this meeting, probably you won't see it for some reason. You'll see all about DACA. They'll be talking about my remarks on DACA, which lasted for 10 seconds but we're very serious about DACA. But you'll be hearing about DACA. But this is so important for what we're doing.

Gary Cohn, what would you like to say, Gary?

MR. COHN: Look, Mr. President, as we talked before you got here, this has been a big team effort for the last year.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

MR. COHN: Your Cabinet and the White House has been working on putting together a plan. We've worked with many of the mayors, commissioners, governors in the room, many of the legislators. We think we have a very robust plan that can get everything you want -- over a \$1.5 trillion investment, shorten the approval process to less than two years. We're very excited to have you launch it here today, and we're excited to get to work on it, as Secretary Chao said.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. And, Ralph Northam, congratulations on your victory. Your opponent was not a Trump person, I have to be honest with you. (Laughter.) If he was, he would have done much better. Doesn't mean you wouldn't have won, but he would have much better. But he was not a Trump person. But I would like to congratulate you. And what would you like to say about infrastructure?

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: Well, thank you Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: -- for being in this meeting. And obviously infrastructure is so important. I'd like to start by thanking you for what you're doing with our military. As you know --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: -- we build the finest warships and submarines right there in Newport News.

THE PRESIDENT: It's true.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: And we have the largest naval base right there in Norfolk. And infrastructure is so important to us. I think you mentioned rural Virginia or rural America. Obviously, broadband is very, very important to us.

And, Mr. President, what I would like all of your help with: our port of Virginia. We are in position to be the best port, and we want to make sure that we have the depth --

THE PRESIDENT: That could be one of the best in the world if they invested not that much money, relatively speaking. I agree with you.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: Absolutely. And we're in the process where we need to dredge our channels to 55 feet, widen our channels.

THE PRESIDENT: So that's been in the process for many years probably, right? How many years, Ralph, has it --

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: I don't know, Mr. President, but we're ready to get it done. And --

THE PRESIDENT: I love it. Just put it on the list. Put it high on the list.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: And it's all about exporting and --

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: -- keep this economy going. So thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Thank you very much, Ralph. And good luck with everything. I think you're going to do a great job. Very important is what you said about the port. Because I've been hearing about your port for many, many years. I've also heard it could be one of the great ports of the world. And locationally you can't do better. But they could never get their dredging permits.

So, Scott, I know you'll work on that and hopefully you'll get them quickly. All right?

GOVERNOR NORTHAM: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: All right, thank you.

Wilbur Ross, please.

SECRETARY ROSS: We're looking forward to playing a big role in the transformative projects. That's what's been allocated mostly to Commerce, to chair the committee picking the big transformative projects. So we hope all of you will have a good deal of imagination and determination at the transformative level.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Thank you, Wilbur. And do you agree with what I said about the tax with countries coming in and taking advantage of our country? I assume.

SECRETARY ROSS: Sure.

THE PRESIDENT: If you don't -- oh, would he be in trouble. Could you imagine if he said no? (Laughter.)

A reciprocal tax, Wilbur. How do you feel about that?

SECRETARY ROSS: Well, we gave away so much unilaterally that we really have to claw it back. A lot of these trade things are self-inflicted wounds. It wasn't that other countries made us. We volunteered concessions that were mindless. They might have been good public policy right after World War II, when we had to rebuild Europe and rebuild Asia, but that's a long time ago, and the concessions that were appropriate then are singularly inappropriate now.

THE PRESIDENT: So when I look at some of these trade deals, I say, how could this have happened? And the truth is, it was laziness. After World War II, we helped Germany, and we helped all countries. We helped -- and you had the Korean War; we helped South Korea. We helped everybody. And nobody changed. They had no money, they had no anything. They were rebuilding from a war. And the agreements basically stayed the way they were. And they became very wealthy, and they could pay a tremendous amount, and they could pay us back. But nothing happened.

And the reason nothing happened is, number one, no imagination. Number two, the people that were in my office and other offices were lazy. They just let it go. But we're not going to be letting it go because it's truly affected our country.

When we have \$21 trillion in debt, we're not going to let that go. And when people want to send their cars into our country but they won't accept our cars -- and so many other products; cars are the least of it -- although cars is a big category -- we can't do that. We can't do that. We will no longer do it, I will tell you that.

I would like to ask Bill to say a few words, because you have been very, very -- I would never use the word progressive -- but you have been very good in what you've done. (Laughter.)

GOVERNOR HASLAM: Yeah, be careful please. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: And when I do use the word "progressive," I use it in a much different sense. You understand.

GOVERNOR HASLAM: Well, thank you. And I think I'll echo what you've heard from the other governors -- and the mayors would say this too, as well -- is there's a whole different attitude today when we talk with your departments. Instead of "Here's what's best," it's "How can we help, and what do you think we should do?" And I can't tell you how much all of us appreciate that. It's a whole different mindset.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Bill.

GOVERNOR HASLAM: We very much appreciate it.

The second thing -- and I think what you'd hear from everybody in here -- is, there's a lot of different perspective about what the private sector should do and what government should do. But transportation infrastructure is, without question, that's the fundamental responsibility of government. Nobody can build their own interstate system; I don't care who they are. Nobody can build their own network that this nation relies on. So we're very encouraged.

Last year, in Tennessee, we combined the largest tax cut in history with actually increasing revenue toward transportation because our infrastructure was so out of date -- everything from getting our agriculture product to market to making certain that our --

THE PRESIDENT: You've made a big difference in Tennessee.

GOVERNOR HASLAM: -- largest cities have it. So we're with you, and we want to encourage this to actually be fulfilled as quickly as you can because we're quickly getting behind the rest of the world.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's right. Thank you very much, Bill.

Actually, to me this is a very, very sexy subject. The media doesn't find it sexy. (Laughter.) I find it sexy because I was always a builder. I always knew how to build on time, on budget, and that's what we want here.

One of the reasons we like the public-private is we'll get some of that involved in getting these things done quickly -- much more rapidly than you would get them done as a government, as good as some of these governments are.

So I very much appreciate that, Bill. But Tennessee is really keeping up. They're doing a good job. I looked at some numbers yesterday, and it's really -- really doing a good job.

Would anybody to like to say something? Yes sir, go ahead.

MAYOR BENJAMIN: Thank you, Mr. President. Steve Benjamin, the Mayor of Columbia, South Carolina.

First, I want to thank you for having us here. You didn't have to.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MAYOR BENJAMIN: So thank you for having us here.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MAYOR BENJAMIN: I look forward to learning more about the plan. DJ and Billy, and everyone -- the entire team -- have been very helpful in communicating with us over the last several months.

We met in December of 2016, right after your election.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

MAYOR BENJAMIN: And in that meeting, you reassured us that you would support the tax exemption on mini-bonds, and you've done that. And I want to say thank you for that. It's the way in which we build the vast majority of infrastructure across America. Almost 80 percent of it done by state and local (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: And that's helped out a lot, hasn't it?

MAYOR BENJAMIN: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And I wanted to also thank you for your support of private activity bonds and how that's reflected in your budget.

I want to thank you for your support of the military. Fort Jackson -- someone may disagree -- but is the finest Army training base in the world. (Laughter.) Victory starts in Columbia, South Carolina. We train a preponderance of the men and over half of the women in Columbia, South Carolina.

In America's cities, and Columbia is not atypical, we have the same tax rate that we had 10 years ago. Five of the last seven years, we finished with a budget surplus. We've created an environment where private sector capital is welcome. We treat it well; it grows. And we've increased our police department budget by 60 percent.

And I would tell you that what we need -- and we'll spend some time raising the flag on some of our priority projects. You may remember, in October 2015, we had a massive flood -- 1,000-year event -- in Columbia, South Carolina.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. I do.

MAYOR BENJAMIN: Some significant damage to our canal that still, as we work through FEMA and FIRC, we have to get repaired. So we'll be spending some time raising that to the top of the priority pile as we're working with this.

But I want to tell you again, America's mayors are happy to be around the table. We look forward to talking about the expedited nature of the plan, and working closely to make sure we're protecting the environment as we do that.

But I'm happy to be here. I look forward to continued dialogue. I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the fact that public pensions are very interested in getting into the infrastructure business as well. And if there's some possibility to level out that extra \$200 billion, I'll be interested in supporting that as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

MAYOR BENJAMIN: Thank you for having us, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mayor. I appreciate it. The areas that have military are going to be greatly affected in a

very positive way because the number that we were able to get -- \$700 billion -- and again, that was the key to what I did.

I hated to give away certain money, and some of it I consider to be terrible. But we needed 60 votes. We needed 60 votes. So in order to get the military taken care of -- which is, to me, number one, by far -- we did that. But those areas that are heavy on the military, you're going to see a tremendous difference.

When I was in the private sector, I used to get listings all the time for forts -- military forts, military installations that would be for sale. And I used to say to myself, "This is 10 years ago, and 5 years ago. How can we be selling so much?" Well, now I'll bet they wish they didn't sell some of them. You know, they would sell them as surplus. And I used to say, "How many do we have?" Because you'd get a lot of listings. But they closed the lot. But we're going to be expanding ones that we have. And those areas, the towns and cities and states, they're really going to be a tremendous impact.

And, you know, one of the other things is jobs. We're going to be building this equipment. We don't go out to other countries to build our military equipment. And when we have allies, especially people that we help where we give aid to -- which we're going to have to start looking at also -- but they go out and order military equipment from other countries, I say, "No, you're not." If you're not going to order it from us, you're not getting any aid.

And that's why a lot of the defense companies and jobs -- again, it's all jobs -- but they're very happy, because, I mean, we were giving out money and they'd buy helicopters from different countries. I don't want to say which country. Specifically one.

I say, "So we're giving you money to buy military equipment, and you're buying military equipment in another country. How does that work?" And I remember the President of a country laughed when I said it. He said, "Finally, somebody gets it." (Laughter.) And they were actually restricted from buying from us. So we could give them money, but they were restricted for human rights issues and other issues.

So, a lot of things are changing and they're changing very fast.

Yes, sir.

MR. LOUGHERY: Mr. President, I'm Rob Loughery, Chairman of the County Commissioners in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. I know you know where Bucks County is. For everyone else, this is a (inaudible) suburb of Philadelphia --

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

MR. LOUGHERY: -- coming off the big Super Bowl win. And we won the Super Bowl with the Philly special, right? So Nick Foles and Doug Pederson.

And I have a Philly special for you when it comes to transportation projects. And I know everyone is aware of I-95 and the turnpike, and one of the biggest missing links in that interstate highway has been the connection of the turnpike and I-95.

And after, literally, 40 years of planning and approvals and permitting, they're finally making the connection. And there's a picture on these slides up here.

But the problem is they're making a connection only on two of the eight ramps. So if you're going north on the 95, you can go east --

THE PRESIDENT: I know where those connections are.

MR. LOUGHERY: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: So you want additional connections?

MR. LOUGHERY: We want the other six. And all of the permitting is done.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

MR. LOUGHERY: All the environmental review is done.

THE PRESIDENT: That sounds good. You jumped to the head of the line.

MR. LOUGHERY: So we got a half-a-billion-dollar project. We have --

THE PRESIDENT: It's how much?

MR. LOUGHERY: Half a -- about \$515,000,000.

THE PRESIDENT: All right, get the price down a little bit. (Laughter.) Get it down. (Laughter.)

MR. LOUGHERY: We can do that. We can do that.

THE PRESIDENT: That sounds like a lot of money for connections, right? What do you think, Phil? You could do it for \$550 [million].

GOVERNOR BRYANT: (Inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: Huh? (Laughter.)

MR. LOUGHERY: We're ready to go.

THE PRESIDENT: That's sound good.

MR. LOUGHERY: It's a small project.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

MR. LOUGHERY: Then, just the last thing I want to say about the permitting I think is so important. In Bucks County, we have 115 bridges. Small, country bridges.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

MR. LOUGHERY: And we closed one seven years ago, which is not far from my house, and it used to be the way I was -- my quick shortcut to my daughter's soccer field practices.

So my oldest daughter finished middle school, finished high school. She's graduating this year and going to the United States Naval Academy. But she's finished both of those things, and we haven't even started work on the bridge that closed (inaudible).

THE PRESIDENT: Were you going to build a new bridge, or renovate that bridge?

MR. LOUGHERY: We were going to replace the bridge, but because of the historical process and the reviews and the consulting processes and going through section --

THE PRESIDENT: Is it permitted?

MR. LOUGHERY: It's not. We can't get the funds.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, then you're not going to get a bridge.

MR. LOUGHERY: No, I'm just saying -- but I'm saying the permitting process that you're talking about, truncating that --

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. Well, we're going to -- yeah, we're going to do it.

Look, you've doing this for years, as you say, and it's been a pretty unpleasant process. But we're going to do it quickly. Now, the historical -- if it's local and historical, you're going to have to take care of that yourself, you know that.

MR. LOUGHERY: We know. But just the point being that --

THE PRESIDENT: I'd love to get it done for you. That's the kind of thing we want to get done.

MR. LOUGHERY: Yeah, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: We have a lot of bridges -- amazingly number -- a high number of bridges that are considered unsafe. And yet they're being used. And I don't want to see tragedies. I don't want to see it happen.

They need paint, they need some fixing. Not even a lot of money. They have to be fixed, or they're going to go down. And those are the things -- safety first. But you want to resurface your roads. I like fixing rather than building new.

I've seen so many roads where they rip out a road, a highway -- I can tell you, 78 in New Jersey -- they ripped it out. And it went on for years. Just ripped the hell out of it. And then they started building a new road in exactly the same location because they wanted the surface to be a little bit higher. They could have stripped the asphalt and put beautiful new asphalt. And then after they built it, it started to settle all over the place. Whereas before, it was there for 100 years, it didn't -- you know, it settled. So you didn't have the problem.

And I would rather see resurfacing. I would rather see -- until we get ourselves -- really, before we start doing the big new projects, I would like to fix what we have through resurfacing and other things, like the bridges. Fix them. A lot less expensive. And in the end, it's probably better. And then we start the new projects maybe with another fund, but we start the new projects.

And maybe with this one. But I really would like to see proper resurfacing, new medians. I would really like to see a competitor to the one that makes the grates that are always -- you know, the guardrails. I talk about them all the time. Whoever represents that company, I think he's the greatest salesman on Earth. (Laughter.) Because they put this stuff in, and within two weeks it's all bent and corroded, and it's terrible.

I want the salesman that represents that company to represent the United States of America. (Laughter.) Because that guy does some job. I wish they could come up with an alternative to the -- it looks like aluminum or -- probably cheap steel.

But when it gets hot, it bends. When it gets cold, it bends. And when somebody hits it, it's a mess. And we put it in and within a year, it looks terrible. And I never understood why they didn't come up with a better system.

So those are the kind of things that I'd like you to look at. And you can come up with a better system probably for less money. But somebody should come up with a better system than that.

So thank you very much. Work on the bridge.

MR. LOUGHERY: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Gary, what would you like to say?

MR. COHN: (Inaudible.) (Off-mic.)

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead.

MS. UPMAYER: (Inaudible.) (Off-mic.)

THE PRESIDENT: Just press the button.

MR. COHN: Just talk.

MS. UPMEYER: As you were walking in, I was starting to make my comments. So I want to thank you very much, Mr. President, for recognizing the importance of rural America and broadband in particular. That's so critical for people working from home in our small communities and making sure they have access.

Additionally, the workforce is so important. We have 2.7 percent unemployment in the state of Iowa.

THE PRESIDENT: Great.

MS. UPMEYER: A historic low. And we need everybody to have the best skills they can possibly have. So, up-training our workforce is going to be a big piece of it.

But one of the things -- I heard the ports mentioned, and I would like to add that the locks and dams are really important. Modernization of the locks and dams on the Mississippi --

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

MS. UPMEYER: -- are really critical to the Midwest and moving our --

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

MS. UPMEYER: -- agricultural products around.

THE PRESIDENT: We have that planned, actually, as you know.

MS. UPMEYER: And we really appreciate that. So that's critical. And we do have one of those interchanges that we're ready to upgrade. We've got about 200 deaths that have been suffered on the I-80/380 interchange around -- between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids.

THE PRESIDENT: 200 deaths? 200 deaths?

MS. UPMEYER: Two-hundred.

THE PRESIDENT: You do have a lot of that. You know, you'll have lot of intersections where people die because they can't get a permit, and it's just crazy. And I'd like you to make that first priority. You have -- like you say, there's one particular, and I heard about it in Iowa.

MS. UPMEYER: Right.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a particularly dangerous intersection, and there's accidents all the time. And with a slight difference in design, and you could get that permit very easily.

MS. UPMEYER: Absolutely.

THE PRESIDENT: We have to get it done. So I'd love that to be a priority, if that's possible.

MS. UPMEYER: Thank you. We appreciate it.

And flood mitigation is a big deal in Iowa, too. Cedar Rapids had a terrible flood. They've got a wonderful project. They have a lot of private dollars ready to be invested, and being invested. And so our new mayor of Cedar Rapids is here with us today.

THE PRESIDENT: Good.

MS. UPMEYER: But I know that's priority for him. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Linda. Thank you very much.

Yes, go ahead.

MR. COHN: Mr. President, on behalf of everyone here, obviously you've taken on enormous interest in infrastructure. You've been on us since day one to make sure we delivered a great plan.

I think we've got a great plan. I think everyone around the table can see how much interest you have. You've delivered your plan to Congress this morning. They're going to be digesting it. It will not come as anything new to them. Your team has been working with both the Senate and the House for the last month or two, so they know exactly what's coming. So we're off to a great start here.

Thank you very much for all your time and effort this morning here. I think everyone is appreciative.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Thank you very much. (Applause.) I appreciate it. Thank you.

I would like to add one further thing. I think it's very important that you go back and you speak to your congressmen, your senators, and the people that represent you to get the push that you're going to need to get this done, because they are working on a lot of things right now, in all fairness to them.

So this is one you're going to have to get a little push. And I think everybody in this room wants this very much, and I want it very much. But you're going to have to call your senator and your congressman and woman to get it done. And it's something that can happen. We'll get approval, we'll create a lot of jobs, and we'll have a great infrastructure in our country once again.

Thank you all very much. I appreciate it. (Applause.)

END

11:54 A.M. EST