

Blumenauer introduces two bills that will help move streetcar projects forward across the nation

Washington, DC – Tomorrow, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) will join U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood on a press conference call at 2:00 pm Eastern / 11:00 am Pacific to announce funding for the next steps for the Portland Streetcar project. Details on the press conference call are below.

In addition, Rep. Blumenauer will introduce two key pieces of legislation today that will help move streetcar projects forward across the nation. In 2003, Rep. Blumenauer wrote legislation to create the Small Starts Program to provide federal funding to help communities develop streetcar projects. Although this program was signed into law, it was never implemented by the Bush Administration. As a result, further development of the Portland Streetcar, and projects like it nationwide, languished.

To repair the damage caused by this backlog and delay, Blumenauer will introduce the “FAST Starts Act of 2009” and the “Streetcar Revitalization Act of 2009.” The “FAST Starts Act” will authorize a grant program that the Secretary of Transportation can use to expedite streetcar projects around the country. The “Streetcar Revitalization Act” would create a Streetcar Capital Investment Grants program within the Federal Transit Administration to specifically support streetcar projects.

“For the past 25 years I have been working in Portland and across the nation not just for streetcar lines but for modern streetcar systems. From our experience in Portland, we know that streetcar systems can create jobs and stimulate local economies. They provide transportation choices, attract economic development, link jobs and housing, and reduce our carbon footprint,” said Rep. Blumenauer. “That’s why for the last three months, I have worked to break the logjam of the last administration by working with the Obama administration to advance a streetcar industry in the United States. Tomorrow’s announcement by Secretary LaHood is a positive step for the future of the Portland Streetcar and a signal of progress for streetcar projects across the nation.”

Background information on Rep. Blumenauer’s bills is attached.

DETAILS ON TOMORROW’S PRESS CONFERENCE CALL WITH SECT. LAHOOD:

WHO: Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Rep. Earl Blumenauer, and Members of the Oregon Congressional delegation

WHAT: Press conference call announcement regarding the Portland Streetcar

WHEN: Tomorrow, Thursday, April 30, 2009 at 2:00 PM EST / 11:00 AM PST

****FOR DIAL-IN INFORMATION PLEASE** contact Lori Irving at lori.irving@dot.gov or 202-366-9268.

For Immediate Release

April 29, 2009

Media Contact: Sahar Wali

202-225-4813 Office/202-834-6919 Cell

Sahar.wali@mail.house.gov