

Washington, DC – Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) today hosted a briefing in Washington’s Capitol on the importance of reinstating the Superfund Tax, which was enacted in 1980 and expired in 1995. Earlier this year, Blumenauer introduced a bill – H.R. 564 – to reinstate the Superfund Tax, which would make polluters pay to clean up toxic sites. Also in attendance at the Blumenauer briefing was Jim McKenna, Superfund Project Manager at the Port of Portland; Kathleen Hadley, Executive Director at the National Center for Appropriate Technology; and Lois Gibbs, Executive Director at the Center for Health, Environment and Justice. Gibbs formed The Love Canal Homeowners Association after she discovered that her son’s elementary school was built on the Love Canal chemical dump.

Following is a statement from Rep. Blumenauer:

“It makes no sense to have the very people who deserve to be protected from toxic waste, chemicals, and other hazardous material pay for the cleanup of Superfund sites. Oil, gas, and chemical industries that benefit from the use of toxic chemicals must be held accountable for the pollution they create. By making polluters pay, we can restore a permanent source to fund the cleanup of our nation’s most toxic and dangerous sites.

“When Lois Gibbs discovered that her children were playing soccer and attending school on top of a former toxic waste dump, she became the accidental activist who spurred the development of the Superfund. When the fund expired more than a decade ago, the rate of cleanup of Superfund sites declined and the burden of funding these cleanups now falls unfairly to all taxpaying Americans. Now, with more than 70 million Americans living within 4 miles of a Superfund site, Lois continues to fight to restore the Superfund program, and I am honored to support her efforts in Congress.

“The expiration of the Superfund program in 1995 has resulted in the delay of cleanups around the nation, including at the Portland Harbor Superfund Site in my district. As of 2003, the balance in the Superfund trust fund dwindled to zero, delaying the cleanup of 29 sites around the country. Now the Superfund relies on general fund revenues, increasing the burden on American taxpayers at a time when cleanup costs are increasing and the nation faces other needs, like health care reform and investments in infrastructure and education.

“Polluters must be held accountable for the waste they create, and the bottom line is the Superfund program works. It has led to the cleanup of over 1,000 sites around the country and improved the lives of millions of Americans. By reinstating this small but important polluter fee on oil and chemical industries, we can protect Americans from the economic and public health perils of dangerous toxic sites.”

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