

Washington, DC—Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) today introduced bipartisan legislation that will provide funding to restore and maintain America's orphan highways, providing redevelopment and business opportunities for local communities. The bill, the Orphan Highway Restoration Act, is co-sponsored by Reps. Jerry Moran (R-KS), Steve Israel (D-NY), and Martin Heinrich (D-NM).

“Vibrant communities across the nation sprang up around the nation's numbered highways, but with the birth of the Interstate System, many of these Main Streets were abandoned,” **said Congressman Earl Blumenauer.**

“Improving and repairing America's Main Streets will revitalize communities, create local business opportunities, and make these areas more livable for residents. From rural communities to small towns and cities, restoring main thoroughfares is a smart way to improve quality of life and give local businesses a needed boost.”

“Due to Interstates, rural communities that flourished from the initial growth of small American highways are now being by-passed,” **said Congressman Jerry Moran.** “This legislation will provide much needed assistance to towns across the nation that want to repair their main streets that otherwise would not have the resources to do so. Our Kansas communities located near orphan highways are an important piece of our country's history, and they must be preserved.”

Orphan highways are former U.S. numbered highways that, over time and as a result of the development of the Interstate System, receive fewer travelers passing through and less investment in maintenance and improvements, but which have become important main street thoroughfares.

This legislation would direct money to maintain and rehabilitate America's Main Streets by funding improvements to sidewalks, medians, bike lanes, and traffic signals. This will not only create redevelopment opportunities for local businesses, but it will improve safety and community livability.

The bill would authorize \$600 million each year from 2010 to 2015 - the duration of the transportation authorization.

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