

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) introduced the bipartisan “Transportation and Housing Choices for Gas Price Relief Act,” H.R.6495, with Reps. Ellen Tauscher (D-CA) and Christopher Shays (R-CT) as original cosponsors. With gas prices tripling over the last seven years, American families need solutions that will help them now. This bill provides immediate relief by giving people more transportation options, helping Americans reduce their commuting costs, assisting transit agencies with rising fuel costs, and increasing housing options near public transportation.

“There is no magic silver bullet that will solve the energy crisis, but there are things we can do now to reduce the impact of high gas prices on American families,” said Rep. Blumenauer. “One thing we must do is give people more transportation choices, and my bill does this by offering incentives for commuters to carpool, ride public transit, bicycle, or telecommute. By diminishing the impact of gas prices on family budgets, these common sense ideas can make an immediate difference in the lives of over-stretched Americans.”

“The most realistic way to bring down gas prices and put money back in our pockets is to reduce demand,” said Rep. Tauscher. “One key way to do that is by making public transit more accessible for people who want to get out of their cars and encouraging transit-oriented development. Today, highway congestion costs the average commuter about \$707 each year, not to mention the damage it does to our environment and the time we are forced to spend stuck on the road commuting and away from our families. This bill will reduce congestion on our crowded highways, improve air quality, and help reduce the price of gas.”

“This legislation will help address our energy crisis in the short term by incentivizing consumers to use public transportation, carpool and telecommute,” said Rep. Shays. “But the key will be a long-term energy policy to decrease U.S. dependence on foreign oil, protect the environment, increase supply, build a market for renewable energy and promote energy conservation.”

The “Transportation and Housing Choices for Gas Price Relief Act” will provide immediate relief by:

- reducing commuting costs and increase commuter choices,
- helping transit agencies cope with rising fuel prices and improve service to deal with increased demand,
- assisting communities in providing transportation options for their residents,
- increasing the availability of affordable housing near public transportation, and
- ensuring that the Federal government leads by example on these issues.

The bill is supported by a coalition of environmental, business and transit groups.

“Rising prices at the pump are a painful burden for consumers and the economy, and the ‘Transportation and Housing Choices for Gas Price Relief Act’ is a terrific response,” said Deron Lovaas, Transportation Policy Director for Natural Resources Defense Council.

“Representatives Blumenauer, Tauscher and Shays have written a prescription for immediate relief in the form of incentives to take transit and telework coupled with lasting solutions such as construction of new rail lines and help with housing purchases in areas near public transportation. NRDC applauds this bill and the smart, effective approach it takes to moving us beyond costly oil addiction.”

“On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I applaud your proposal to help individuals and families cope with the high price of gasoline by offering more transportation choices,” said APTA president William W. Millar. “As millions of Americans have discovered, taking public transportation is the quickest way to beat high gas prices and save money.”

“Americans are resourceful people, and we are trying everything we can think of to reduce our exposure to expensive gasoline,” said Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America. “This bill is timely acknowledgment of what more and more Americans are discovering: We need better options, and we need them fast. Having fostered increasing oil dependence for decades, the least our government can do is speed relief to over-burdened transportation agencies and begin the work of building an America where our quality of life is not dependent on cheap gas.”

“This timely bill provides Congress with a great opportunity to show it is responding to Americans’ pain at the pump, insufficient public transit and costly housing options,” said Michael Replogle, transportation director at Environmental Defense Fund and a former consultant for the U.S. Federal Highway Administration and the World Bank on sustainable transportation strategies. “America has less than three percent of the world’s oil reserves, so we will never be able to produce what we need domestically. Our best bet is to use our limited domestic gas supply wisely and facilitate alternatives to driving where possible, as this legislation does.”

“This legislation is a combination of many ideas and initiatives that if enacted will provide

Americans real options and real relief no matter whether they live in a small town or in a bustling metropolis,” said Jon Martz, President of Association for Commuter Transportation. “This legislation represents the best in legislative politics by recognizing that there is not a silver bullet that will solve the high price of gas. It will take a lot of ideas from a lot of people, and this legislation does just that.”

“This legislation shows that fighting global warming and saving money go hand in hand, because the cheapest, cleanest gallon of gasoline is the one you don’t have to use,” said Colin Peppard, Transportation Policy Coordinator for Friends of the Earth. “The convenient, affordable transportation alternatives that this legislation provides would let more Americans leave their cars in the driveway and skip the gas pump altogether, cutting gas costs and greenhouse gasses at the same time.”

Read more about the [Transportation and Housing Choices for Gas Price Relief Act](#).