

Washington, DC – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) calls the energy bill passed last night by the U.S. House of Representatives “an important point of departure” for a new administration and Congress. “We are not going to reverse years of myopia and mismanagement overnight,” said Congressman Blumenauer. “Today we have taken the opportunity to tie the pieces together in a way that will move us further along toward solving the problem.”

The Comprehensive American Energy Security & Consumer Protection Act, HR 6899, was approved by a vote of 236 to 189. The bill is designed to bring down the cost of energy, allow for responsible domestic drilling, and invest in renewable energy sources to create American jobs and reduce our dependence on oil.

The bill takes steps to immediately reduce the price of gasoline by releasing nearly ten percent of oil from the government’s stockpile—the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—and replacing it with cheaper, crude oil. It ensures that taxpayers get fair value for the oil from public lands and waters, and extends production tax credits for renewable energy sources such as wind and solar.

Several provisions from Congressman Blumenauer’s own legislation made it into the bill, including incentives to support location-efficient housing, an investment tax credit for small wind turbines, a carbon audit of the tax code, and a national consumer awareness program to educate the public on the benefits of public transportation alternatives. The bill also extends commuter benefits for bicyclists who are currently excluded from benefits allowed for parking and transit users.

When the current moratorium on offshore drilling ends September 30th, coastal waters beyond three miles offshore will be available for drilling. HR 6899 prohibits drilling up to 50 miles offshore, up to 100 miles offshore if a state “opts-in” by enacting a state law.

“I am proud that the House has passed the Democrats’ wide-ranging proposal that offers opportunities for responsible drilling for gas and oil, as well as additional, more sustainable solutions,” said Congressman Blumenauer. “I am also pleased that this bill recognizes that giving Americans more transportation choices will help reduce the pain at the pump by expanding public transit service and reducing fares, offering commuter tax benefits for bicycles,

and investing in long term renewable energy solutions that are key to Oregon's green economic development."