

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) issued the following statement in response to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Chertoff's issuance of waivers to bypass more than 30 federal and state laws to build 670 miles of fence along the southwest U.S. border:

“In step with the abuses of this administration, Secretary Chertoff has shown a disregard for more than 30 laws which protect public health and the environment. It is unprecedented that a single person can be above the law without any judicial appeal or remedy, and it is an absurd claim that he must waive the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Air Act, to name a few, in order to build this border fence.

“Repealing these laws will not make us safer or reduce illegal immigration, as Secretary Chertoff suggests, but it will jeopardize our health and the environment. We cannot allow the Bush administration to institute its policies without oversight, which is why I am supporting the Borderlands Conservation and Security Act of 2007, which would repeal the ability of DHS to waive important health and environmental protections while also instilling responsible border protections.”