

Washington, DC – Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) at a Ways & Means Committee Hearing, confronted OMB Director Rob Portman on the administration's FY08 budget proposal. Congressman Blumenauer challenged him to find alternative funding sources for the Secure Rural Schools program (County Payments).

Blumenauer questioned the administration's commitment to reauthorizing the program, pointing out that their proposal to fund it by selling \$800 million worth, or 274,000 acres, of National Forest System land, couldn't even make it through a Republican Congress last year.

"The Oregon delegation has shown a willingness to work with this administration on serious initiatives to protect our schools and counties," said Blumenauer. "I hope they are serious about solving the county payments problem, as we are seeing very serious impacts in our communities."

During the hearing, Blumenauer asked Portman to work with Congress on finding alternative funding sources.

Congressman Blumenauer, a member of the Budget and Ways and Means Committees, is a cosponsor of H.R. 17, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. He also advocated for funding the program in the Emergency Supplemental in a letter to the House leadership last month. If the program is not reauthorized, Oregon's counties will lose over \$230 million in annual funding for schools, roads, and other local services.