

Washington, D.C. -- The House of Representatives today gave final approval for legislation providing funding for several water infrastructure and environmental projects in the Portland Metropolitan area. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) requested congressional support for the projects earlier this year.

“I’m pleased that Congress approved these funds which will protect and restore water quality and fish habitat as well as contribute to the environmental leadership of the Portland Metropolitan area,” said Blumenauer.

Projects funded in the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Conference Report include the following:

- \$220,000 for the restoration of Johnson Creek. This project will implement a series of restoration projects designed to address impaired water quality and natural resource functions of Johnson Creek within the Springwater Industrial Area. The project is within an area slated for industrial development in the near term and will help leverage private development by addressing important stream corridor needs. It is supported by the City of Gresham, the Johnson Creek Watershed Council and the Department of Environmental Quality.
- \$500,000 for energy conservation improvements to the Armory Theater in downtown Portland. The theater is designed as a green building with the goal of being the first historic landmark building and the first performing arts facility in the world to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum status. Funding will be used to install solar panels to provide 20 percent of electric needs and use of micro turbines, high efficiency generators powered by bio-diesel or natural gas that provide low cost, low-emission electricity.
- \$2 million for Lower Columbia River ecosystem restoration. The Lower Columbia River Estuary is one of 28 estuaries designated an “Estuary of National Significance,” with significant environmental, cultural, and historic significance. However, as the estuary also suffers from degraded water quality and habitat loss, habitat restoration is critically important to restore salmon and has been called for in the Biological Opinion for the Federal Columbia River Power System.
- \$400,000 for floodplain restoration on the Willamette River. This funding will be used to

undertake a feasibility study on the Willamette River, which has been designated as an American Heritage River, to identify opportunities to restore natural floodplain function in the combined interests of ecosystem restoration, natural flood storage and other benefits. The project will contribute to the long-term restoration of habitat in the Willamette basin, an important step toward the recovery of federally-listed threatened fish species under the Endangered Species Act.

- \$51,000 to stabilize a dike at St. Johns Landfill, located in a sensitive wetland in North Portland. Surface water is eating away at the perimeter dike around St. Johns landfill, which contains hazardous wastes that could contaminate the Columbia Slough. Funding will be used to complete planning and design, and for construction to carry out repairs to stabilize the dike.

- \$15 million for Columbia River channel improvements. This project, to deepen the Columbia River by three feet, will help accommodate the deeper-draft cargo ships that comprise a growing share of worldwide shipping fleets.

- \$150,000 for a Solar Photovoltaic Test Facility System at Portland State University. This funding will help PSU create the first large-scale solar test facility installation on a university campus to be used primarily as an educational and research tool.

The funding for these projects was included in the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Conference Report, legislation funding the Army Corps of Engineers and certain Department of Energy and Department of Interior programs for the coming year. The legislation originally passed the House on May 24th and was approved by the United States Senate on July 1st.