

WASHINGTON, DC— Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D – Ore.) today introduced a resolution honoring the Native American tribes of the Pacific Northwest and the Treaties of 1855 between these tribes and the United States of America. The resolution, introduced on the eve of the 150th Anniversary of the signing of the treaties, recognizes the contributions made by the Tribes of the Pacific Northwest to the region’s diversity and cultural landscape and reaffirms the promises made in the treaty.

“These treaties helped guide and shape the management of land, water, wildlife, and fisheries of the Pacific Northwest,” Blumenauer said. “They represent solemn pledges of peace between the sovereign peoples of the Pacific Northwest and the United States. In honor of the anniversary of these treaties, I would like to reaffirm and support the promises made 150 years ago by the United States to the tribes of the Pacific Northwest.”

On June 25th, 1855, Joel L. Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Oregon Territory, met with representatives from Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla tribes to negotiate what became the “Treaty with the Tribes of Middle Oregon.” The treaty was created to resolve tensions between settlers and the local tribes. It ceded 6.4 million acres of Indian land to the U.S. In return, the federal government allotted the three tribes a 250,000 acre reservation. Legislation in the late 19th century reduced the reservation to its current 172,000 acres. Today, the Treaty of 1855 remains the bedrock upon which the Confederated Tribes’ government was established by Constitution and By-Laws in 1949.

“Our gratitude is extended to Congressman Blumenauer, and all the co-sponsors of this resolution, for bringing the good faith and good will of the Treaties of 1855 back to the halls of Congress,” said Ron Suppah, Chairman of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Tribe of Oregon. “These treaties are not relics. Their intent, purpose and principles permeate the lives of all people in the Pacific Northwest. Our nations are at their best when we honor our promises to each other.”

Blumenauer’s resolution is co-sponsored by the entire Oregon and Washington state Congressional delegations. The resolution also has the support of the Yakama Tribe, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla, and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.