

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D – Ore) issued the following statement today on H.R. 6, the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The bill, passed along party lines, must still be passed by the Senate before it could become law.

“It is commonly heard that the world changed after September 11, 2001; yet the energy bill did not.

“What Congress is considering this week is virtually identical to that which came forth from Dick Cheney’s energy task force and the Congressional process four years ago. The ever growing concerns about energy reliability, the Enron scandal, skyrocketing gas prices, increasing demands on ever scarce supplies in unstable areas of the world all have not produced a change in the mindset of Congress. At a time when we should call forth our best, the energy bill is both a mediocre effort and more appropriate for the 1950s than this new century.

“With the American energy experience over the last third of a century, public opinion has grown clearer while Congress’ vision has not.

“With 10 percent of our energy use tied directly to our vehicular traffic, it is self-evident to the majority of Americans that our fuel efficiency standards should be significantly increased. The Japanese and Europeans are already far ahead of us. Even the Chinese have now adopted more stringent fuel efficiency standards. Congress cannot keep up with the American public or the policymakers in China, Japan or Europe.

“The public knows that the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is the last place that America should look for oil, not the next place.

“The public supports investing in renewable energy sources, but this bill is heavily skewed towards more public subsidy of oil and gas interests, already awash in cash. Wind and solar energy are abundant, and non-polluting; with a fraction of the resources lavished on traditional energy sources, alternative energy could increase the production and reduce cost.

“The public is not interested in cutting deals with special-interests at the expense of the environment and public health. This bill poses significant risk to air pollution and makes an

unnecessary and unwise compromise with MTBE manufacturers at the expense of state and local authorities and the quality of local drinking water.

“In short, this bill looks at our energy problem through a rearview mirror; it gives too much to the wrong people to do the wrong thing and is dramatically out of step with what the American public needs and wants.

“There will come a time in the foreseeable future when the needs of our country and the wishes of the public are heard and that will be reflected in an energy policy for this century that is cost effective and rational.”