

PORTLAND, ORE—Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) responded to President Bush's budget request to Congress today, with the following statement:

"It's time to put President Bush's priorities and budget to the reality test. This budget projects a deficit in 2006 of \$560 billion, after setting aside the Social Security surplus, and outlines spending of \$2.5 trillion. Defense and security budgets are proposed to rise, while many other domestic priorities, such as education, healthcare and the environment would be cut.

"Our annual deficits of hundreds of billions of dollars will not be made better by borrowing trillions more to extend tax cuts to those least in need and to privatize Social Security. We must begin to address the deficit and long-term financial shortfalls in Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security without simply passing the bill on to future generations. We must also come to terms with the \$5 billion per month we are spending in Iraq and determining how we can bring our troops home without Iraq falling into chaos.

"I am encouraged by steps the President is taking to reduce agriculture subsidies, even though he signed the 2002 Farm Bill into law which provided them. These subsidies hurt more than they help states like Oregon, and they continue to hamper the economic development of some of the world's poorest countries.

"Further reductions have been proposed, as the President promised in his State of the Union speech, by drastically cutting or eliminating 150 programs. The budget proposes increases in Pell Grants, which I support, but at the expense of other education programs. I look forward this Congress to working through the budget and appropriations process to ensure our nation's budget reflects the reality and priorities of Oregonians."