

Washington, D.C.—Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D—Ore) issued the following statement today in response to President Bush’s call for alternative energy sources and less oil dependence, in last evening’s Annual State of the Union Address:

“The President gave us no hint that he understands Americans’ problems – or knows how to solve them. Instead of proposing common sense solutions, he continued to advocate and defend the misguided policies of his administration. One of the most glaring examples was his call to end our “addiction to oil.” He never once mentioned conservation, which is the cheapest, quickest and most effective way to reduce this costly and dangerous addiction.

“I’m disappointed that the President still wants to drill, dig, and subsidize our way out of his energy crisis. His proposal to rely on nuclear plants that require federal financing, his pursuit of futuristic hydrogen cell technology while ignoring cars that are already fuel efficient, and his continued advocacy for coal reflect his commitment to failed energy policies of the past.

“President Bush’s rhetoric on reducing dependence on oil by promoting new technology does not match reality. Bush’s policies for the past five years have been feeding our addiction to oil. Last year, when the President and the Republican-led Congress had an opportunity to address energy issues, they crafted a 1950s-era Energy Plan based on increased fossil fuel production and imported oil. In that legislation, less than one-quarter of the tax incentives went to alternative fuels and energy efficiency. In addition, Republicans defeated efforts to increase funding for research, development, and deployment of new energy generation and new energy efficiency technologies.

“I am proud to say that many Americans understand what we need to do. The public understands that conservation is the best way to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. Just closing the loopholes in our current fuel efficiency standards could cut U.S. oil dependence by 1.5 million barrels per day in 2025.

“If President Bush is serious about conserving energy and saving American jobs, he should figure out how to help American automakers regain a competitive edge on fuel efficient and hybrid cars. Instead, last night we heard more of the same empty promises and a lack of vision.”

