

Army Corps of Engineers

Through its construction of water projects, the Army Corps of Engineers is a major player in developing local infrastructure and working with local communities. The ongoing construction and maintenance of Corps dams, navigation channels, flood control structures and other water development projects dramatically alter the nation's landscapes and natural hydrological systems. No other federal agency has had - and continues to have - such a profound impact on the nation's environmentally sensitive flood plains, waterways and coastal areas.

In recent years, several government and private studies have found that the Army Corps of Engineers is often biased in favor of large projects, lacks adequate environmental safeguards in its planning process, and has manipulated data to secure approval for major projects. The Government Accountability Office (GAO), the National Academy of Sciences, internal Pentagon investigators, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) have all detailed serious problems with the Corps' current planning process. In particular, the Principles and Guidelines (P&G), under which the Corps of Engineers operates, have not been updated since 1983.

Congressman Blumenauer authored a provision in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, requiring the Corps to finally update the P&G to take into account modern science and environmental values. He also helped ensure that WRDA 2007 contained other reforms, including a requirement that costly or controversial projects undergo independent review to ensure that these projects are economically justified and based on sound science.

Blumenauer continues to work with local and national Army Corps leaders to encourage that ecosystem services are included in the economic value of project planning.

Flood Insurance

On the Federal level, Congressman Blumenauer is a leader in reforming the National Flood Insurance Program to ensure that it not only provides assistance to homeowners who experience flooding, but also that it helps keep people out of harm's way. In 2004, Congress passed and the President signed the "Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act," which reforms the National Flood Insurance Program to provide mitigation assistance to property owners to live in repetitively flooded areas. Rather than continue to rebuild, the program provides repeatedly flooded homeowners assistance in either elevating or moving their homes away from flood waters. Those who refuse mitigation assistance will pay the full actuarial costs for choosing to live in a risky area.

Increased flooding is one of the impacts associated with global warming and major storm events.

Unfortunately, planning models used by federal agencies like the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Corps of Engineers often do not take this possibility into account. In 2007, the House passed Blumenauer legislation to require the FEMA to take global warming into account when updating its floodplain maps.

Global Water Issues

The world's population is increasing, and its supply of water is decreasing. Almost 1 billion people lack access to an improved water supply, according to the World Health Organization. The UN estimates that more than 2.8 billion people will face severe water stress by 2025. Congressman Blumenauer advocates for improved U.S. leadership in providing drinking water and sanitation to developing countries around the world.

Formerly a member of the International Relations Committee, he traveled in 2002 to Johannesburg, South Africa, to represent the United States and citizens of the third Congressional District at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. There, United States and 185 other countries agreed to cut in half the percentage of people without access to water and sanitation. To ensure that the United States fulfills this commitment, Congressman Blumenauer introduced what has been called "landmark legislation," [H.R.1973, titled "The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act,"](#) which makes providing clean water a foreign policy objective. After overwhelming passage in the House and unanimous passage in the Senate, President Bush signed the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act (Public Law 109-121) into law on November 30, 2005. Since then, Congressman Blumenauer has been working closely with the State Department to ensure the law is implemented.

Protecting Public Lands and Oregon Treasures

In 2006, the House of Representatives passed the Mount Hood Stewardship Legacy Act, introduced by Reps. Blumenauer and Greg Walden (R-OR). The bill designated wilderness and wild and scenic rivers on Mount Hood, created and funded a recreation plan, and supported the development of local forestry and transportation plans. In [March 2009](#), Congress passed, and President Obama signed, this legislation to designate 127,000 acres of new wilderness and almost 80 miles of new wild and scenic rivers on and around Mt. Hood. For more information,

[click here](#)

. In 2008, Congressman Blumenauer, along with Rep. DeFazio, Rep. Hooley and Rep. Wu, also introduced an "Oregon Treasures" legislative package, which would increase protections for Oregon

's Mt. Hood, Rogue River and Oregon Caves.

Congressman Blumenauer believes that national treasures such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge should be the last place we explore for oil, not the first. He is a co-sponsor of legislation to designate the 1.5 million acre coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge as wilderness, thereby permanently prohibiting oil and gas drilling on the coastal plain.

Congressman Blumenauer has also worked to protect national forests in Oregon and around the country. He is a cosponsor of the Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act, which would protect areas of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. He strongly supported the Clinton era Roadless Area Conservation Rule, and has co-sponsored the Roadless Area Conservation Act, which would codify the rule into law.

Salmon and Watershed Restoration

While serving on the Water Resources Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Blumenauer authorized a program that has become an ongoing source of appropriations funding for salmon habitat restoration projects on the Lower Columbia River and Tillamook Estuaries. Congressman Blumenauer has also encouraged the Clinton, Bush and Obama Administrations to keep all scientifically credible options on the table when crafting an endangered salmon recovery plan. He is a strong supporter of maintaining flows on the Columbia River and its tributaries that allow for the recovery of endangered salmon.

In 2010, Congressman Blumenauer and Senator Jeff Merkley introduced the [Columbia River](#)

[Restoration Act](#)

which would provide federal funding for toxics reduction in the Columbia River and support a collaborative strategy developed by stakeholders in the region to reduce levels of harmful pollutants in the river.

Congressman Blumenauer has been a leader in the effort to bring the local Johnson Creek Watershed back from the brink. This watershed was once written off as a dumping ground, and vital fish passage corridors were threatened by development and blocked by culverts. With the Congressman's support, local jurisdictions began coordinating long term restoration efforts which are now bearing fruit. Culvert removal and in stream restoration has renovated miles of habitat, salmon are swimming in Johnson Creek once again, and the neighboring community has become active stewards of the watershed.

Superfund

The Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program was created in 1980 to provide money to clean up the nation's worst hazardous waste sites where the party responsible for polluting was out of business or could not be identified. Before it expired in 1995, money for the Superfund came mainly from taxes on the polluters themselves. Because Congress has not reauthorized the tax, the burden of funding cleanups of toxic waste sites now falls on the shoulders of taxpaying Americans. To address this, Congressman Blumenauer introduced legislation in the 110th and 111th Congresses to reauthorize the Superfund tax. The Congressman's proposal to reinstate the Superfund taxes was included in President Obama's FY 2010, FY 2011, and FY 2012 Budgets.

The Portland Harbor on the Willamette River in downtown Portland was designated a Superfund site in 2000. Portland Harbor is contaminated with metals such as mercury, PCB's, pesticides, herbicides, and other toxins. Congressman Blumenauer is bringing local stakeholders together, including businesses, Tribes, environmental groups, local government, and federal agencies, to discuss the ongoing process and ensure that clean up deadlines are met.

Water and Oceans

As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, Congressman Blumenauer is working to find creative ways to finance water infrastructure projects around the country. In July of 2009 he introduced H.R. 3202, the "[Water Protection and Reinvestment Act](#) ." For more information about the bill, please review the [WPRO Fact Sheet](#)

[WPRA Summary](#),

or visit the comprehensive

[Water Protection and Reinvestment webpage](#)

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As a lifelong observer of the effects of pollution and runoff on Oregon's rivers, Congressman Blumenauer is deeply concerned about the state of America's waterways. He has co-sponsored the "Clean Water Authority Restoration Act," which would clarify that the Clean Water Act has jurisdiction over all waters of the United States, not just "navigable waters." In October 2007, the House of Representatives passed H. Res. 725, a Blumenauer resolution honoring the 35th anniversary of the Clean Water Act and calling for a recommitment to ensuring clean and safe water for future generations.

Congressman Blumenauer is also a member of the Oceans Caucus, which focuses on promoting scientific research of our planet's oceans, and the House Congressional Coastal Caucus, which keeps Congress informed about coastal issues and concerns, including needed reauthorizations such as the Coastal Zone Management Act, budget information and changes in Administration policy. He is outspoken about the dangers that climate change, pollution, unsustainable development and sprawl will bring to the environmental health of our coastlines and oceans.