

Washington, DC – Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore), author of legislation to reinstate a “polluter fee” to clean up the nation’s most hazardous and complex – or Superfund – sites, issued the following statement on [EPA’s letter to Congress](#) in support of reinstating the lapsed taxes:

“Since the Superfund tax expired 15 years ago, federal funding has slowed to a trickle and the more than 1600 Superfund sites across America are not getting cleaned up,” **said Blumenauer.**

“By renewing the tax, the industries that had a hand in creating the problem – not taxpayers - will once again be held accountable for cleaning it up. More importantly, we can put tens of thousands of people to work by investing in the restoration of these polluted sites.

“This is a win for the environment, a win for local communities, and a win for the economy.”

Background

The Superfund was designed in 1980 to provide money to cleanup sites where the responsible party was out of business or could not be identified. The Superfund was financed by taxes on polluters, which expired on December 31, 1995. Since the expiration of these taxes, the Superfund program has been largely financed through the Congressional appropriations process, which comes from taxpayer contributions.

Congressman Blumenauer introduced H.R. 564, the Superfund Reinvestment Act, in 2007 to reinstate these polluter fees.

Superfund sites are some of the most contaminated in the nation. 70 million Americans—10 million of which are children – live within four miles of a Superfund site. They are exposed to toxic waste such as arsenic, benzene, PCBs, mercury and a range of solvents. Groundwater is often contaminated. Because of this, many health problems have been related to Superfund sites, including infertility, low birth weight, birth defects and breathing difficulties.

In a majority of cases, the parties responsible for the contamination pay for the cleanup. However, in some cases, a responsible party cannot be found, cannot pay, or refuses to pay. In these cases, the Superfund is tapped to pay for the cleanup. Before 1995, the Superfund was financed by excise taxes of 9.7 cents per barrel on crude oil or refined oil products, excise taxes of \$0.22 to \$4.87 per ton on certain chemicals, and a corporate income tax of 0.12 percent on the amount of a corporation’s modified alternative minimum taxable income that exceeds \$2 million.

The Superfund Reinvestment Act would reinstate the Superfund taxes on polluters to their previous levels. The revenue garnered from these taxes would be about \$1.7 billion per year and \$18.9 billion over 10 years

Reinstating the Superfund will protect communities while helping to create jobs in the engineering, construction, and development sectors while also improving the environment and improving community health.