

Washington DC - Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) today, two years after the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, introduced a resolution, H. Res. 782, calling for a renewed commitment by the United States to improving access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation worldwide. Blumenauer, a member of the House International Relations Committee, attended the Johannesburg Summit.

“The United States needs to step up and meet its commitments to ensuring safe and clean drinking water throughout the world,” Blumenauer said. “I commend the current international effort but we need to do more.”

Between 2 million and 5 million people die each year from lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation. Between 1990 and 2002, the percentage of people with access to clean water grew from 77% to 83% and the percentage of people with access to sanitation rose from 49% to 58%, yet over 1 billion people still lack access to safe drinking water and more than 2.3 billion people have no access to basic sanitation services. As the population in developing countries continues to rise, this situation is becoming more urgent. At the Johannesburg Summit, the United States joined with over 185 other nations committing to cut in half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Blumenauer’s resolution recognizes current efforts to meet this commitment and calls for an increased effort towards this goal by the United States and all developed nations.

“We have a long way to go in meeting the water needs of the world. Leadership from the United States is essential to make significant progress in providing safe and clean water to the billions who need it and to ease the growing conflicts for this precious resource,” said Blumenauer.

Blumenauer’s resolution is endorsed by CARE USA, the Natural Resources Defense Council, MercyCorps, the National Wildlife Federation, Living Water International, and WaterPartners

International. Original co-sponsors of H. Res. 782 are Christopher Shays (R-CT), George Miller (D-CA), James Greenwood (R-PA), Tom Allen (D-ME), and Mark Udall (D-CO).