

WASHINGTON, DC-- Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), together with colleagues Congressmen David Wu (D-Ore.), George Miller (D-Calif.) and James Greenwood (R-Penn.) yesterday introduced legislation to authorize federal funding for six "Sustainability Education Centers" at universities across the country for the promotion, development and implementation of integrated environmental, economic and social sustainability programs. Wu, Miller and Greenwood are all members of the House Education and Workforce Committee. Miller serves as the top ranking Democrat on the Committee.

"Portland State University has made revolutionary advances on its campus, creating programs to promote and teach sustainable practices to the next generation of community leaders," said Blumenauer. "This bill will help PSU and other universities preserve our economic competitiveness and environmental health by promoting sustainable development practices around the nation."

H.R.4664, the "Higher Education Sustainability Act of 2004" would promote multidisciplinary education, research and outreach programs that address environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability. Funds could be used to establish new Centers or strengthen already existing programs. PSU would be eligible for funding under the bill.

PSU is a leader in the area of sustainability education and training as well as in its campus operations. A continuing education certificate program for professionals in the field of sustainability and a graduate certificate program in sustainability have been added to PSU's curriculum to make students competitive in the current job market. Collaborative research initiatives with business and government that address pressing development issues are also underway. The University is currently working across the campus to conserve energy, recently replacing light fixtures, installing low-flow water systems and harvesting rainwater to be used in the restrooms. PSU's efforts to construct "green" buildings and to use smart technology for energy and water use are expected to save \$275,000 annually- the equivalent of tuition costs for 80 students.

"Portland State University's efforts on behalf of sustainable development education are to be commended," said Wu. "This legislation will promote the importance of sustainability practices and help develop educational centers devoted to exploring the best way to integrate the social, economic and environmental aspects of development."

"This legislation is a major step forward in recognizing that sustainable practices can deliver important economic and social benefits, as well as environmental gains,"

commented Daniel O. Bernstine, President of PSU. "Portland State University has made a major commitment to incorporating sustainability principles into the curriculum and in our operations. Congressman Blumenauer and his colleagues are to be commended for recognizing the crucial role that higher education can and must play in developing such practices working collaboratively with business, government, and others. It will help the United States become an international model for sustainable development."

Sustainable development practices are being advanced by hundreds of U.S. companies, cities and government agencies through a variety of international agencies. Educating and training the next generation of scientists, engineers, environmental managers, planners and business professionals can help in the development of new tools and strategies for environmental and resource conservation, energy efficiency and more sustainable development.