

Washington, DC — Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), together with the bipartisan leadership of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today introduced a \$375 billion, six-year highway and transit funding bill designed to address America's growing congestion and highway safety problems. The legislation would mean an almost 50 percent increase in Oregon's highway funds, currently at about \$30 million annually.

"Transportation choice is a fundamental building block for livable communities," said Blumenauer. I am pleased to join my colleagues on the Committee in introducing this important legislation. It provides the level of funding necessary to get our economy moving, addresses a multitude of transportation needs across this country and provides communities with more choices in how they travel."

The "Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" (TEA LU) is the much-awaited House version of legislation to reauthorize federal funding for bikes, transit, pedestrian, bridge and highway projects across the country. If enacted, it would provide a 72 percent overall funding increase for these programs and will be a major economic catalyst.

"The transportation need currently facing Oregon is tremendous," Blumenauer noted. "All of the state's metropolitan areas are working to expand their transit systems and reduce road congestion. Additionally, the state is facing \$4.7 billion in bridge repair needs and working to develop bi-state solutions to improve freight and passenger travel on the I-5 trade corridor. TEA LU provides the funds necessary to realize these multi-modal needs."

The House reauthorization bill includes several provisions that Blumenauer has been championing, including: a new Safe Routes to School program to encourage communities to adopt strategies and fund projects designed to allow children to walk and bike to school safely; and, a new "Small Starts" transit program that would create a \$1.35 billion discretionary fund for streetcar, commuter rail and bus rapid transit projects to receive federal capital funding.

The bill also would provide a significant increase in funding for the popular Enhancements, Transportation and Community System Preservation Program, and the Congestion Management and Air Quality programs that are utilized in large and small communities across the country to provide funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, improve transportation and land use planning, and develop innovative solutions to congestion problems.

A number of important details remain to be resolved in the legislation, most notably how the

Blumenauer Endorses \$375 Billion Transportation Investment Package

Tuesday, 18 November 2003 13:00

bill will be funded and key environmental provisions. Blumenauer is working to address both issues, and to ensure that when the bill is considered in Congress early next year that it maintains environmental protections and public participation requirements that have been a hallmark of current federal transportation legislation.