

Washington, D.C. — Congressman Blumenauer (D-Ore.) today joined with colleagues Congressmen Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Charlie Bass (R-N.H.) in offering a Superfund clean-up amendment to legislation funding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Their bi-partisan amendment would have provided an additional \$114.7 million for the Superfund program to meet clean-up needs at ten sites, including the McCormick and Baxter Superfund site in Portland.

“By adding \$114.7 million to the Congress’ modest Superfund allocation, we would still be on a downward path for national environmental clean-up,” Blumenauer said. “But the additional funds would enable us to solve our problem in Portland as well as nine other sites around the country whose funding has been axed by the EPA.”

EPA announced last week that it would not fund clean-up at ten Superfund sites, including the contaminated McCormick and Baxter Superfund site on the Willamette River. The agency cited lack of funds as the reason for halting clean-up at these ten sites.

Blumenauer’s amendment would pay for the clean-up by cutting funds from NASA’s nuclear propulsion space project. Blumenauer argued that reducing funds for a futuristic project be a better use of federal funds because it meets critical community needs for environmental clean-up and potential economic development. Even with the proposed reduction, the ten-year, multi-billion dollar program at NASA would still have seen a 31% percent increase.

“The McCormick and Baxter site has a long history of toxic residue that affects the immediate waters,” said Blumenauer. “This contamination has prohibited the site from being used for recreation or economic development and symbolizes the dramatic need to restore the land used by past industrial activity.”

Blumenauer was heartened that the amendment received 114 votes in spite of the short notice given to Members of Congress before today’s quick floor debate of the spending bill.

“Despite our loss on the floor today, we still have the opportunity to make a strong case as the funding bill works its way through Congress,” an optimistic Blumenauer noted. “We will continue to carefully scrutinize government spending to make sure that we are not ignoring the needs of our neighborhoods in favor of programs that are nice but not essential.”

Blumenauer Fights to Restore Superfund Clean-Up Funds

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Blumenauer's amendment was offered to the fiscal year 2004 Appropriations bill for the Veterans Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, EPA and Related Agencies.