

Washington DC - The House of Representatives last night approved an amendment to the Energy Policy Act offered by Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) to encourage increased cycling use. The "Conserve by Bike" amendment promotes cycling as an alternative to driving to save energy, reduce vehicle emissions and improve public health.

"Biking is an important transportation choice for millions of Americans," Blumenauer said. "A comprehensive energy policy should consider not just how we consume energy, but also how we conserve. Energy conservation does not have to be difficult: it can be as economical, healthy, and environmentally friendly as a bike ride."

The "Conserve by Bike" Amendment establishes a pilot project by the same name within the U.S. Department of Transportation. This program will launch ten pilot projects throughout the country that utilize education and marketing tools to encourage people to replace some of their car trips with bike trips. The amendment also directs the Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a research project on converting car trips to bike trips. That study would consider what car trips Americans can reasonably be expected to replace with bike trips and what energy savings would result.

An increased number of bike trips would improve our public health by reducing vehicle emissions and facilitating physical activity, as well as conserving energy resources, Blumenauer argued during debate on the measure. And, unlike automotive transportation, bicycling is emissions free.

"As our nation struggles to address clean air challenges and alarming rates of adult and child obesity, promoting cycling can be critically important," said Blumenauer. "Americans already love to bike. Obtaining this basic information will provide a strong foundation for taking cycling in America to the next level as a more accepted transportation alternative."