

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, the U.S. House of Representatives was scheduled to vote on H.R. 5428, the Water Resources Development Act of 2002 (WRDA). The bill was originally scheduled to be considered on the House floor this morning under a procedure that would have prevented debate on this \$3.6 billion bill, which authorizes Army Corps of Engineers' water resources projects.

Members of Congress concerned with improving and modernizing the Army Corps of Engineers' planning process had been promised an opportunity to introduce amendments to this bill when it came to the floor. This would not have been possible under these procedures. Due to overwhelming opposition from Democrats as well as moderate and conservative Republicans, today's vote was postponed.

Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), a member of the House Water Resources Subcommittee, spoke on the House floor this morning and called upon the House leadership to bring the WRDA bill to the House Floor under a rule that would allow a full debate on reforming the Army Corps of Engineers.

"Members, taxpayers, and the environment deserve to have a fair debate on a WRDA bill this year," stated Blumenauer. "The projects in this bill that are valuable to Members and their districts should not be held hostage by Congress' reluctance to discuss important policy issues."

The Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for the construction and maintenance of over 1,500 federal water resources projects in the United States. In recent years, several government and private studies have found that the Army Corps of Engineers' process is often biased in favor of large projects, lacks adequate environmental safeguards in its planning process and has manipulated data to secure approval for major projects. As a result, there is a large and growing consensus that the Corps' process must be modernized to ensure that civil works projects are economically and environmentally sound.

"It is time for Congress to get its act together and relieve the pressure on the Corps of Engineers to construct projects that have questionable benefits to the environment and to taxpayers. I believe that Congress is largely at fault, and that we should take the lead in implementing reforms," said Blumenauer.

Early in the 107th Congress, Congressman Blumenauer formed the bipartisan Corps Reform

## **Blumenauer Calls for a Fair Debate on WRDA and Army Corps Reform**

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Caucus to examine the financial accountability and record of environmental protection of the Army Corps.