

PORTLAND, OR--Congressman Earl Blumenauer today announced he will oppose the House Republican's approach to obtaining "fast track" authority from Congress for future trade agreements. At a press conference in Portland today, Congressman Blumenauer called H.R. 3005, sponsored by Republican Ways and Means Committee Chairman Bill Thomas, "inadequate," and said he will not vote for it in its current form.

In a small, private White House meeting, Blumenauer personally asked the President to take a bi-partisan approach to trade and respond to the many concerns about labor, environment and other issues raised by Oregonians and others across the country. Congressman Blumenauer continues to support free trade, but not at the expense of worker's rights or environmental protection.

"I will continue to work with those who support free trade and the environment, free trade and worker's rights, to build a broad bipartisan majority for a trade bill that addresses the legitimate concerns Oregonians have expressed about our trade policy," said Blumenauer.

The House Ways and Means Committee passed H.R. 3005 over the objections of most Democratic members earlier this fall. The House Republican leadership is expected to bring it to the floor for a vote before adjournment, possibly this week. Members of Congress have been called to the White House for personal lobbying by the President.

Blumenauer told President Bush about the concerns that Oregonians have raised about the effect of current trade policy on protection for the environment, labor and other issues. He urged the President to move past the Thomas bill and attract broader support for trade by fully and fairly addressing the public's concerns.