WASHINGTON – Today, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), a senior member of the Budget and Ways and Means committees, released the following statement regarding H.R. 7, the “American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act”:

“As a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I am appalled at the fantasy finance scheme Republicans are proposing. Rather than working in a bipartisan fashion to find revenue for the Highway Trust Fund, House Republicans instead would tie revenues from oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Wildlife Refuge and in our coastal waters to transportation funding. Drilling in these areas is opposed by the public and runs the same environmental risks that gave us the *Deepwater Horizon* disaster. What’s more, my colleagues know full well that revenues from this drilling would do almost nothing to close our funding gap. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the best case scenario would result in $5 billion over ten years, when we need $60 billion over five years to fund the Trust Fund. This bill’s reliance on such an inadequate funding scheme shows just how unserious and partisan an effort it is at real transportation reform.”

“What is even more frustrating is the squandered opportunity for doing something that will truly rebuild and renew America. Now, more than ever, is when we should have taken advantage of the opportunity to capitalize on twenty years of work on transportation policy. We should be moving forward and putting Americans back to work updating our sadly outdated transportation system. Instead, the Republican bill moves us back twenty years, to a time when our only answer to any problem was to build more roads and when we didn’t have to compete with China and Brazil, who are both investing almost twice what Republicans want us to invest. Now is not the time to give communities fewer choices, to make it harder for individuals to have a say on how their money is spent, or to reduce protections for environmental and public health.”

“The United States needs a comprehensive transportation authorization to put Americans to work, to set the stage for future growth, and to strengthen American productivity. The bill presented yesterday is not only inadequate, it marks a step backward and turns a historically bipartisan bill into nothing more than another example of partisan posturing. Rather than taking a serious approach to strengthening our transportation system, this bill will make it more difficult for local communities to have the flexibility and support necessary to build and maintain transportation systems that serve all of their citizens, to offer transportation choices, and to encourage economic development.”