

A NATIONAL PLAN TO REINVEST IN AMERICA

Congressman Earl Blumenauer ■ Third District of Oregon ■ www.earlblumenauer.com

America is facing an infrastructure crisis that we cannot afford to ignore. This year, we celebrate the bicentennial of the Gallatin Plan (1808) and centennial of the Roosevelt Plan (1908), two plans that guided infrastructure investments in the 19th and 20th centuries. Today, America faces new challenges, and requires a new vision to rebuild America, one that ensures that our transportation, water, and sewer investments meet the environmental, economic, and social challenges of the 21st century.

A NEW NATIONAL VISION TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Congressman Blumenauer has introduced legislation establishing a “U.S. Commission on Renewing and Rebuilding America” (H.R. 5976). This commission of 17 members appointed by Congress, the Administration, and state and local governments, will synthesize existing reports to identify current challenges and needs; commence a thorough set of public hearings on infrastructure conducted in at least 50 Congressional districts; and articulate a national vision -- with specific recommendations -- and set of principles to inform future federal infrastructure investments.

HELPING COMMUNITIES COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

Today, our transportation choices are responsible for one-third of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. For instance, since 1980, the number of miles Americans drive has grown three times faster than the U.S. population and almost twice as fast as vehicle registrations. In 1969 approximately 50 percent of children in the United States walked or bicycled to school, but in 2001 only 15 percent of students did. Although new vehicle technology and low carbon fuel can substantially reduce emissions from automobiles and light trucks, these gains are likely to be offset by continuing growth in vehicle miles traveled. Congressman Blumenauer is drafting legislation to help communities address global warming through design and transportation improvements. His bill would provide grants, tax credits, technical assistance, and other incentives for better community design and a wide range of transportation solutions. With these tools, communities will reduce travel demand, shorten driving distances, and create vibrant neighborhoods where people can walk and bike safely and can access convenient public transportation.

CREATING A WATER TRUST FUND

Our nation’s water infrastructure needs have grown while federal funding has declined from 78% in 1978 to 3% today. The GAO, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Water Infrastructure Network have estimated that the nation faces a growing water infrastructure funding gap of between \$300-500 billion between current spending and our needs over the next 20 years. To address this gap, Congressman Blumenauer is proposing the creation of a Water Trust Fund to provide a deficit-neutral, consistent, and fire-walled source of revenue to states to support the replacement, repair, and rehabilitation of clean and drinking water infrastructure.

REINSTATING THE SUPERFUND TAX

In 1980, Congress taxed polluters to create the Superfund to clean up abandoned toxic sites. Although it expired in 1995, Congress has never reauthorized the Superfund tax, thereby shifting the burden of cleaning up these toxic waste sites from known polluters to local governments and taxpayers. Reinstating the Superfund tax would restore stable funding, elevate public health concerns over protection for polluters, ensure that toxic sites are properly cleaned, and give the EPA the power to recover clean-up costs from liable parties. Congressman Blumenauer has introduced H.R. 3636, the “Superfund Reinvestment Act,” to reauthorize the Superfund tax.

