



## Congressman Earl Blumenauer

### Congressional Bike Caucus Highlights from the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress

The 110<sup>th</sup> Congress was an exceptional session for the bicycle movement, as congressional attitudes more closely reflected changes on the ground across the country. As energy prices skyrocketed, congestion increased and the implications of global warming became more apparent, increasing numbers of workers turned to bicycle commuting to combat these trends. As commuters learned that they could reduce their dependence on foreign oil and burn calories rather than cash, bike sales increased at a steady rate in stores across the country.

The 110<sup>th</sup> Congressional Bike Caucus boasted 204 members. Fifty-seven of Caucus members were Republicans, demonstrating once again that bicycling is truly a bike-partisan issue. Responding to nationwide trends, the Bike Caucus worked to provide more federal funding for bike lanes and trails, as well as programs to increase bicycling safety and convenience.

#### **H Con Res 305, “The National Bike Bill”**

H. Con. Res. 305, “The National Bike Bill,” recognizes the importance of bicycling in transportation and recreation, documenting more than twenty specific, quantifiable benefits that bicycling brings to cyclists, motorists and pedestrians alike. It calls on Congress to establish national target levels for increased bicycle use and intermodal travel. The National Bike Bill supports providing federal incentives for adoption of State and local “complete streets” policies, expanding funding for Federal transportation programs that support non-motorized infrastructure and safety enhancements, as well as developing coordinated interstate bicycle routes and bike-friendly land protections, and much more. Lastly, the legislation re-establishes the Interagency Bicycle Task Force, launched after the 1994 report to Congress.

The House passed H. Con Res. 305 by voice vote on May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2008, recognizing the importance of bicycling in transportation and recreation. The bill had 34 bi-partisan co-sponsors as well as the strong support of bicycling and health advocacy groups. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 the legislation was referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

#### **HR 1498, “The Bike Commuter Act”**

Introduced in March of 2007, the “Bike Commuter Act” aims to bring balance to Transportation Fringe Benefits by extending the subsidy to include bicycling, which is a cleaner, healthier, more efficient mode of transportation. Currently employers can offer parking benefits of up to 215\$/mth for parking or \$110/mth for transit or vanpooling to qualified employees. Under H.R. 1498, bicycle commuter benefits would be included in the same benefit pool as transit or vanpooling.

This legislation was adopted in a scaled down manner as part of the clean energy tax package and was incorporated into H.R. 1424, the “Emergency Economic Stabilization Act” along with several other energy tax extenders. Effective January 1, 2009, employers can offer the fringe benefit up to \$20/mth.

**HR 5951, the “Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2008” (introduced; not passed)**

This legislation, introduced by Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) with fourteen bi-partisan co-sponsors, would have required states and metropolitan planning agencies to ensure safe access for all users - pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities -- in all redesigned or newly built transportation projects. Creating safe and complete streets is essential to developing safe and cohesive networks of bike lanes.

**Bike amendment to HR 3021, the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Green High Performing Public School Facilities Act”**

This legislation, passed in June, 2008, included an amendment sponsored by Congressman Blumenauer (D-OR) and Congressman Klein (D-\_) that allows funds to be used for “improving building infrastructure to facilitate bicycle and pedestrian access.” This language permits building improvement funds to pay for improvements such as bike lanes, bike racks, bike storage facilities and projects that improve the safety of student and staff cyclists.

**Bike amendment to HR 6003, the “Passenger Rail Reinvestment and Improvement Act of 2008”**

Congressman Blumenauer and Congressman Anthony Wiener (D-NY) amended this legislation, passed in June, 2008, to allow grant money to be used for the installation of bike racks and bike cars on intercity rail. Popular Amtrak routes such as The Cascade Line, traveling between Portland and Seattle, have shown the need for increased capacity for their continuously sold-out bike hook service.

**Safe Routes to School**

Created and authorized under SAFETEA-LU, the federal Safe Routes to Schools program has enabled numerous state programs to create safe routes for children who walk or bike to schools. Bolstered by the success of these programs at elementary schools across the country, Congressman Blumenauer introduced H.R. 6495, the “Transportation and Housing Choices for Gas Price Relief Act of 2008,” which included provisions to expand Safe Routes to School programs to high schools and increase the funding available in FY09 by \$500 million.

*For more information on Congressman Blumenauer's bike and livability agenda, please contact Ms. Tyler Frisbee in the DC office at (202) 225-4811 or Meekey Blizgard in the Portland office at (503) 231-2300, or check out our website at <http://www.blumenauer.house.gov/>.*

**Legislative  
Agenda**