



A NATIONAL PLAN TO REINVEST IN AMERICA

Congressman Earl Blumenauer ■ Third District of Oregon ■ www.blumenauer.house.gov

H.R. 564: SUPERFUND REINVESTMENT ACT

The Superfund was designed in 1980 to provide money to cleanup sites where the responsible party was out of business or could not be identified. Before it expired in 1995, the money for the Superfund came through taxes on the polluters themselves. However, Congress has never reauthorized the tax, making the burden of funding cleanups of toxic waste sites fall on the shoulders of taxpaying Americans. It is time to make public health, not protection for polluters, a priority. This Congress must meet the critical challenge of financing the rebuilding and renewal of America. The American Society for Civil Engineers recently graded our transit infrastructure a D and our roads a D-. At the same time, the financial resources dedicated to preserving and improving these investments have badly eroded.

Background: Superfund sites are some of the most contaminated in the nation. 70 million Americans — 10 million of which are children, live within four miles of a Superfund site. They are exposed to toxic waste such as arsenic, benzene, PCBs, mercury and a range of solvents. Groundwater is often contaminated. Because of this, many health problems have been related to Superfund sites, including infertility, low birth weight, birth defects and breathing difficulties.

Before 1995, the Superfund trust fund was subsidized by taxes on the chemical and petroleum industry. When a large pollution problem occurred, and the responsible party could not be found, could not pay, or refused to pay, the Superfund was tapped to pay for the cleanup. Superfund law has resulted in the cleanup of more than 800 toxic waste sites in communities all over the U.S., freeing residents from health risks and fears that come with living next to toxic waste.

The Current Problem: Over the years, the fund has had less money available for cleanup work, which is occurring as costs for work to restore Superfund sites are on the rise. In some cases, the EPA no longer has enough money to launch cleanups. Finally, without the Superfund tax, the EPA has lost leverage in getting companies to clean up sites.

Reauthorizing the Superfund Tax – The Specifics:

The Superfund Reinvestment Act would reinstate the Superfund taxes on polluters to their previous levels. This includes excise taxes of 9.7 cents per barrel on crude oil or refined oil products, excise taxes of \$0.22 to \$4.87 per ton on certain chemicals, and a corporate income tax of 0.12 percent on the amount of a corporation's modified alternative minimum taxable income that exceeds \$2 million. The revenue garnered from these taxes would be about \$1.7 billion per year and \$18.9 billion over 10 years

Why Should the Superfund Tax be Reinstated?

- Companies should clean up their own waste.
- It is unfair to pass the burden onto taxpayers, who bear no responsibility.
- Without reauthorization, millions of Americans will be needlessly exposed to toxic waste while industries escape billions of dollars in pollution taxes.
- It's time to put the burden back where it belongs: on polluters.

For more information, contact Rep. Blumenauer's office at (202) 225-4811



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