

PRICE STATEMENT ON EARTH DAY

April 22, 2009

Washington, D.C. - Congressman David Price (D-NC) submitted the following statement for the record in the House of Representatives regarding today's celebration of Earth Day.

Earth Day 2009 marks the 39th year in which we've set aside a day to reflect upon our solemn responsibility to protect the environment from the adverse effects of human activity and preserve it for future generations. Earth Day reminds us of our nation's obligation to be good stewards of the planet – a responsibility both moral and practical, personal and collective.

As individuals, we are learning to assess our "footprint" and to recognize that the decisions we make on a daily basis – the cars we drive, the foods we eat, the energy we consume – must be measured against not only our own comfort, but also the sustainability of our planet and its limited resources. It is a personal obligation that cannot be taken lightly; an ethos that firmly commits each of us to passing the great inheritance we have been given to our children in a better form than it was given to us.

As communities, we must reconcile the competing demands of economic development with those of responsible stewardship. It's a particular challenge in high growth areas like the one I represent. My district, the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, has been widely recognized as one of the best areas in the country to live, work, raise a family, and start a business. It is the fastest growing metro region in the country, on track to double in population over the next 20 years, and the dramatic population expansion will bring significant environmental challenges in tow.

We know that we must grow, and we embrace the economic opportunities that such growth presents. But how will we grow? To maintain and improve our quality of life in the midst of robust expansion and development, we need to undertake a coordinated regional planning effort that meets our infrastructure needs while preserving livability and sustainability. We must promote not just growth, but smart growth.

That is why I brought our colleague, Rep. Earl Blumenauer, to the Triangle this week to help me host a summit on Smart Growth Development. He stands as an expert in our body on sustainable development, and the summit brought together elected officials, business leaders, environmentalists, and community activists for panel discussions on smart growth principles and transportation infrastructure. I look forward to working with Rep. Blumenauer and my other

colleagues to develop tools that will encourage smarter growth, more responsible development, and greater livability in communities across the country.

And as a nation, we need to pursue policies that promote responsible stewardship of the earth here at home while providing responsible leadership in the global arena. This Congress has already begun working with the Obama Administration to forge a new direction for energy policy that will emphasize renewable fuels and energy efficiency.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we've made an unprecedented investment in public transportation and renewable energy production that will spur energy savings. This legislation will accelerate deployment of a new, smart power grid to make the electricity grid more efficient and reliable. They will advance scientific research into battery technology and energy efficiency measures, expand the national effort to weatherize homes, and make a sizeable investment in alternative energy research.

The recovery package addresses critical transit needs as well, investing in buses, commuter and light rail, and intercity passenger rail, including Amtrak and high speed rail. Public transportation, beyond saving individual Americans both time and money, can also help our nation save as much as 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline and reduce carbon emissions by 37 million metric tons each year.

This spending is not simply driven by our commitment to a cleaner and healthier planet; rather, it represents a down-payment on investments to meet our country's economic and infrastructure needs and a blueprint for the direction in which our country's energy and transportation policies will go. They are investments that can fuel our future economy and make our country more prosperous and competitive than ever before.

We must think globally as well, and continue to work towards a comprehensive solution to dramatically curb our greenhouse gas emissions and address the threats of climate change – a threat that our government ignored for far too long. I am pleased that House and committee leadership have recently released draft legislation that would establish a market-based cap and trade policy to serve as a basis for discussion of comprehensive clean energy legislation. This is no idle threat we now face: scientists tell us that we must reduce emissions by roughly 80 percent by mid-century to avoid a dangerous climate tipping point. As the world's largest per capita emitter of greenhouse gases, our nation must be a leader in finding clean energy solutions that reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, create a new generation of jobs, and

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provide climate and energy security for us and the generations to come.

On Earth Day 2009, I urge President Obama to continue working with Congress to develop climate change legislation that will set us on a path that is science-based and adequately aggressive. I also urge the President and my colleagues to foster smart growth in American communities by developing policies that promote accessible transit, affordable and sustainable housing, and responsible management of water and other resources. And I urge us all to take actions in our individual lives that reflect our commitment to preserving this wondrous planet and all the diverse forms of life that thrive upon it.

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