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Groundbreaking ACTion on Active Transportation in Congress
New Legislation Will Build Healthy, Clean, Cost-Effective Transportation Options

Washington, D.C., March 2, 2010 — Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Campaign for Active Transportation celebrated a milestone today with the release of Rep. Earl Blumenauer's (D-Ore.) [Active Community Transportation \(ACT\) Act of 2010](#) [H.R. 4722].

This landmark legislation promises to launch a new era of investment in building complete systems of facilities that make it safe and convenient for Americans to choose to walk or bicycle instead of drive for routine, short trips. The ACT Act creates a competitive fund to which communities can apply and receive funding to build these active transportation systems. In the process, tens of thousands of jobs in construction and small businesses will be created, invigorating local economies, while also saving Americans money at the pump.

"This is possibly the most important legislation to come down in the last 20 years for those who value trails, walking and biking, and we applaud the visionary leadership Representative Blumenauer and his colleagues have shown through the creation of this bill," says Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) President Keith Laughlin. "In 2007, when we launched our [Campaign for Active Transportation](#) at RTC's Portland conference, we knew it would take a focused, smart investment plan to make active transportation systems commonplace. The ACT Act is that plan, and we've never been more ready."

Americans are hungry for safe and convenient opportunities to walk or bicycle to work, school, shops, transit and other daily destinations. Nearly half of the trips taken in the United States today are within a 20-minute bicycle ride, and half of those trips are within a 20-minute walk. Further, 90 percent of transit trips begin with walking or bicycling. There is huge potential for an increased role for active transportation to these nearby destinations. No wonder respondents in a national poll said they would spend 15 times current levels on walking and bicycling (currently, less than two percent of all transportation dollars) at the expense of what they view as lopsided spending on roads. To this end, the ACT Act is strategically targeted to maximize mode shift by providing "intensive, concentrated funding of active transportation systems rather than discrete piecemeal projects."

“Everywhere we go, communities are eager to pull the pieces of their active transportation systems together so the public can safely walk and bike,” says RTC Vice President of Policy Kevin Mills. “It is essential that we give Americans the means to achieve their dreams of livable communities by offering healthy, clean, affordable and enjoyable ways to get around. The ACT Act provides the missing piece of our transportation puzzle; ironically, we have left the simplest and most cost-effective investment for last.”

RTC has been the lead advocate behind the creation of this bill, organizing more than 50 communities around the country, and soliciting [case statements from these communities](#) that detail how, if the funding were available, they would create active transportation systems in their area. Most of these communities have been engaged for years, committing local resources to their organizing and planning efforts, earning support from mayors, city and county councils, advocacy and business leaders. Additionally, [a national letter of support](#) has been signed by representatives from more than 300 national, regional and local groups and more than 30 mayors and other elected officials.

The introduction of this bill, which would be a part of the larger transportation reauthorization, represents opportunity knocking. Current original co-sponsors of the bill include Representatives Capuano (Mass.), Carnahan (Mo.), Cohen (Tenn.), Filner (Calif.), Lipinski (Ill.) and Moran (Va.). RTC is calling on its supporters and coalition members to contact their members of Congress and encourage them to become co-sponsors of the ACT Act. For more information on RTC and the ACT Act, visit www.railstotrails.org/act.

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Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 100,000 members and supporters, is the nation's largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines and connecting corridors. Founded in 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's national office is located in Washington, D.C., with regional offices in California, Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. For more information visit www.railstotrails.org.