

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 30, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We strongly urge your administration to include a two-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program in any future emergency disaster supplemental funding bill.

On United States Forest Service land, the federal government has historically shared 25 percent of timber harvest revenues with counties to compensate for federal ownership. On certain land managed by the Department of Interior, the Bureau of Land Management shares 50 percent of the revenue from federal timber sales with counties. Due to declining timber harvests, a critical source of funding for rural counties has seen significant decreases.

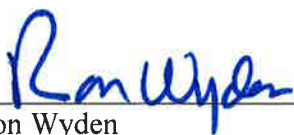
In 2000, Congress passed SRS with broad bipartisan support as a fiscal solution to help fund essential services resulting from the reduced revenue-sharing receipts. Since then, SRS has been a critical lifeline for over 700 counties in over 40 states across the country by helping fund schools, road maintenance, law enforcement, and search and rescue operations. However, its authorization lapsed last year and rural counties are now back to simply receiving the timber revenue-sharing receipts. These receipts are up to 80 percent less than what counties received under SRS.

We have seen firsthand the hardships rural counties face as a result of SRS authorization lapsing. Without the certainty of SRS payments, schools, libraries, and jails will close, as they have in Oregon. Roads go unpaved and become unsafe. Mental and physical health services are scaled back or even ended. Fewer and fewer law enforcement officers are forced to patrol larger and larger areas.

The SRS program continues to be a critical safety-net for forest counties as we work to diversify rural economies, improve forest management and forest health, strengthen historic forest revenue sharing with local governments and ensure that our forests provide a range of values such as clean water, jobs, and wood fiber for local economies.

In the interest of working together in a bipartisan way to support local rural communities, we ask that you and Director Mulvaney work with the Congress to include a reauthorization of Secure Rural Schools in any emergency disaster funding legislation. We appreciate your assistance with this matter.

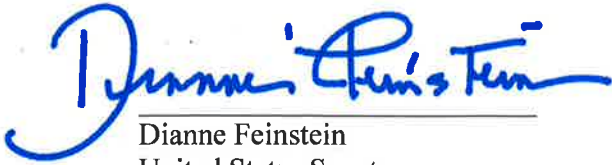
Sincerely,




Ron Wyden
United States Senator




Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator


Steve Daines
United States Senator


Jon Tester
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator


Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator


Tom Udall
United States Senator


Patty Murray
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503