

County urges Congress to fund Secure Rural Schools

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Staff Reports

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Lake County >> This week the Lake County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution urging Congress to reauthorize and fund the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. Funding through the act mitigates the impact to county governments from the reduction of allowable timber harvesting production on federal forest lands.

California's rural counties have come to rely on Secure Rural Schools (SRS) funding — more than \$33 million statewide — to support public schools and critical county road programs.

"SRS funding is critical to Lake County's ability to provide for our residents, and its immediate reauthorization should be of the utmost priority for Congress," said Anthony Farrington, Lake County Board of Supervisors Chairman and Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) Delegate. "In addition, it is time to look at a long-term, stable funding source for forested counties and schools to maintain vital programs and avoid an interruption in services and operations."

SRS expired on Sept. 30, 2013, resulting in a loss of funding in 2014 and future years to support critical programs in schools and counties across the United States. California's forested counties and schools located within those counties are dependent upon federal revenue-sharing programs such as SRS for maintaining local roads, and for providing vital local services and programs.

Lake County joins RCRC in a statewide effort to raise awareness on the importance of SRS funding for California's rural counties, and highlight how the lack of authorization impacts their ability to adequately and appropriately fund classroom instruction and improve local roads.

Lake County's share of SRS revenue averages approximately \$250,000 per year. These funds are deposited into the Lake County Public Works general road fund and are used for daily operation and maintenance. Lake County Department of Public Works Director Scott DeLeon says, "The SRS funds equal about what we typically spend on road maintenance materials in a one year period. The maintenance of our roads could take a huge hit without that funding."

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