

February 25, 2013



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The Honorable Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Boxer:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I want to thank you for your strong support of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and your efforts to ensure that a one-year extension of the program was included in MAP-21 (PL 112-141). This stopgap solution once again helped provide funding for rural schools, roads, and other critical county services. However, SRS expired at the end of fiscal year 2012, and final payments were distributed to counties earlier this year. If Congress fails to extend or reauthorize the program in a timely manner, layoff notices for rural schoolteachers and road department personnel are a very real possibility.

Our members understand the serious budget situation the country is facing and the difficult budget decisions you will be considering in the coming weeks. Nevertheless, the loss of SRS funding will put an enormous strain on already stretched county budgets, limiting local governments in their ability to provide necessary services. Furthermore, counties in California have absorbed billions in state funding cuts and have taken on more and more responsibilities of managing and paying for traditional state-run programs. We want you to fully understand that the loss of SRS funding will be devastating to our members and to rural California.

As I'm sure you are aware, Senators Max Baucus (D-MT) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) recently pledged to extend SRS for at least one more year, giving Congress more time to craft a long-term resolution for rural communities. I urge you to work with your colleagues in the Senate to secure an additional year of funding for the program. The immediate need in our rural communities for these funds and the risk of failing to extend a proven program is simply too great to delay any longer.

Thank you again for your continued leadership on this issue. Should you have any questions regarding our position or would like additional information, please contact Hasan Sarsour, CSAC Washington Representative, at 202-898-1444, or Karen Keene, CSAC Director of Federal Affairs at 916-327-7500 ext. 511.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Cate".

Matt Cate
CSAC Executive Director