

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 4th, 2020

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
H-232, U.S. Capitol

Leader Kevin McCarthy
H-204, U.S. Capitol

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
S-230, U.S. Capitol

Leader Charles Schumer
S-221, U.S. Capitol

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

We write to share our steadfast support for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. Specifically, we urge you to include a reauthorization of SRS and maintain robust PILT funding as part of the appropriations process.

SRS and PILT serve as a lifeline to rural America's local governments and now, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the budgets of these rural counties have taken a hit. These two programs fund roads, schools, law enforcement, and essential county services, such as public health programs. With additional demands on their resources as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, rural communities and counties are stretched thinner than ever.

Despite being small, rural, and generally relatively remote, county governments that rely on SRS and PILT are responding to the same national health crisis facing larger cities and urban areas. Extending and funding these two programs has always had wide, bipartisan support.

As Congress works to establish a permanent county payments solution, diversify rural economies, improve forest management and forest health, strengthen historic forest revenue sharing with local governments, and ensure that public lands provide a range of values such as clean water, jobs, grazing opportunities, and wood fiber for local economies, a short-term reauthorization is critical for counties across the country.

In order to assist these rural counties' response to the current public health crisis, as well as to invest in infrastructure, schools, and law enforcement, Congress must advance a reauthorization of SRS. Further, we urge you to maintain robust funding for PILT as you continue funding negotiations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Sincerely,



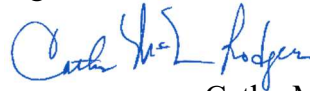
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Congressman Kurt Schrader



Congressman Russ Fulcher



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