

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 13, 2015

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

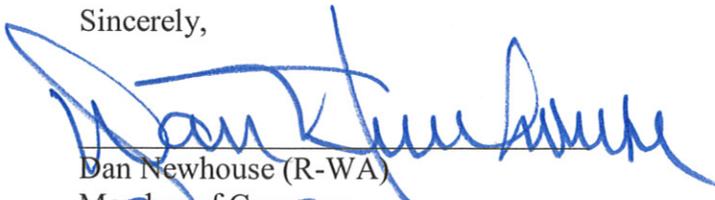
As Freshman Members of the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, we write to request the House of Representatives quickly reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS), which was not reauthorized for fiscal year (FY) 2014. The SRS program is critically important to communities all across the country, as more than 700 counties and school districts receive funding through the SRS program.

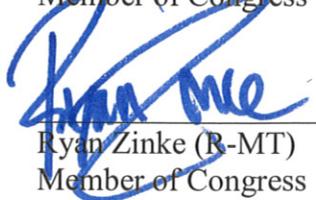
For more than 100 years the Forest Service has worked with rural counties and shared 25 percent of timber revenues to compensate for federally-owned lands, which cannot be taxed at the local level. In our districts there are counties and school districts that rely on these funds to help support critical services, such as education and infrastructure projects. Over the past two decades, the levels of harvested timber on federal lands has dropped significantly, leading Congress to recognize the necessity of honoring its obligations by supporting these counties and school districts. However, as of September 2013 the program has failed to be reauthorized and payments ceased being made in April of 2014.

If Congress fails to reauthorize the SRS program and the distribution of payments continues to lapse, rural communities across the country will face increasing hardship and be unable to provide their residents with basic services.

As newly elected Members of Congress, we urge you to work together in a bipartisan manner to quickly reauthorize the SRS program. It is essential that our local governments have the ability to access this critically important source of funding.

Sincerely,

  
Dan Newhouse (R-WA)  
Member of Congress

  
Ryan Zinke (R-MT)  
Member of Congress

  
Gwen Graham (D-FL)  
Member of Congress

  
Bruce Westerman (R-AR)  
Member of Congress

*Earl L. "Buddy" Carter*  
Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (R-GA)  
Member of Congress

*J. French Hill*  
French Hill (R-AR)  
Member of Congress