

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

January 26, 2007

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Don Young  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Resources  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Messrs. Peterson, Rahall, Goodlatte, & Young:

Thank you for your cosponsorship of and strong support for HR 17, a strongly bipartisan bill to reauthorize for seven years the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (PL 106-393). We are writing to respectfully request that the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources discharge or markup HR 17 as quickly as possible. Ideally, HR 17 would be approved by the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources during each respective committee's first business meeting of the year. This program, and funding for it, is critical to 615 rural counties and 4,400 schools near national forests in 39 states across the country.

P.L. 106-393 expired at the end of September 2006, and if not reauthorized and funded, will result in a substantial and excruciating funding cut for rural counties across America. This act was passed by Congress in 2000 to provide funding to offset the loss of revenues to counties resulting from severely reduced federal timber sales. The law has kept schools open, roads maintained, search and rescue missions operating, and many other essential local services afloat. The federal government made a pact with rural communities nearly a century ago when it established the federal timber sale program which provided counties a portion of revenue from federal timber sales, and it's essential that the federal government keep its commitment to rural counties.

The Resources Committee moved swiftly early in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress to approve this legislation and we appreciate your considering our request to expedite consideration of HR 17 in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. We stand by ready to assist you in any way.

Sincerely,



Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



Greg Walden  
Member of Congress