DeFazio Calls on President to Include Program's Renewal in Annual Budget **January 10, 2006**

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WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) called on President Bush to include in his annual federal budget, funding to support the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Reauthorization Act of 2005, legislation that would reauthorize the successful "county payments" program for an additional seven years.

"This program is the lifeblood of rural counties across America who serve every day as stewards of our federal lands," said DeFazio. "County Payments reauthorization has the support of members across the aisle in Congress and across the country. The next important step for maintaining the program that is critical to the existence of many Oregon counties is funding in the president's budget. We must keep our promises to rural America and maintain a century-long commitment to counties and child education."

DeFazio's request came on the same day the Department of Agriculture issued $147 million for fiscal year 2005 through the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act, to counties in Oregon to maintain schools, roads and other public services.

Of Oregon's 36 counties, 32 received payments through the program totaling over $273 million last year. Because of the large amount of timber historically harvested from federal lands in Oregon, Oregon counties have received significant payments from the funding formula, with the Fourth and Second Districts receiving the most federal investment respectively.