



California State Association of Counties
1100 K Street, Suite 101
Sacramento, CA 95814

April 18, 2008

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Lewis:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I am writing to urge you to include a one-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS/County Payment program) in the fiscal year 2008 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations legislation. The County Payments program, and funding for it, is critical to the survivability of California's forest counties and schools.

Almost a year ago, your committee approved a similar one-year extension of the SRS program as part of the fiscal year 2007 emergency supplemental appropriations bill. This one-year bridge provided rural counties and schools with an economic lifeline, and CSAC is sincerely appreciative of this effort.

With funding under last year's extension slated to expire in June, we urge you to include another one-year extension of the County Payments program in this year's emergency supplemental spending measure. Without this funding, counties are again facing the prospect of imminent budget cuts as a result of the fiscal uncertainty caused by the absence of an SRS renewal.

As you know, forest counties in California rely heavily on the County Payments program to maintain local roads and other public infrastructure, operate search and rescue missions, and provide many other essential local services. Faced with the impending loss of this vital funding source, counties are in the process of planning to lay off employees, cancel contracts, curtail sheriff's patrols, close libraries, and eliminate mental health care services. Moreover, with the current economic downturn worsening in many rural areas across California and the nation, it is now more important than ever that Congress provide these communities with a stable source of funding.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this and other issues of importance to California's counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul McIntosh".

Paul McIntosh
Executive Director
California State Association of Counties

Cc: California Congressional Delegation