

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2021

Acting Director Shalanda Young
U.S. Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Acting Director Young:

We strongly urge you to include the creation of a permanent national endowment fund for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program in your Fiscal Year 2022 budget request modeled on the bipartisan Forest Management for Rural Stability (S.1643) Act.

On United States Forest Service land, the federal government has historically shared 25 percent of timber harvest revenues with counties to compensate for federal ownership. On certain land managed by the Department of Interior, the Bureau of Land Management shares 50 percent of the revenue from federal timber sales with counties. To address declining timber harvests that led to significant funding decreases for forest counties, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools program with broad bipartisan support in 2000. Since then, SRS has become a critical lifeline in over 700 counties in over 40 states by providing funding that supports schools, road maintenance, public safety, search and rescue operations, as well as mental and physical health services.

In recent years, however funding for the program has lapsed or decreased, creating a financial rollercoaster for counties as they budget for essential county services. After the significant economic impact of COVID-19, funding certainty for rural communities is essential. An endowment fund for SRS to make the program permanent, would provide that certainty, and give counties the funding stability and reliability that they need to support their communities.

In the interest of working together, we introduced bipartisan Senate legislation to create an endowment fund for Secure Rural Schools. We ask that you include support for a permanent national endowment fund for Secure Rural Schools modeled after the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act in your upcoming request. We appreciate your assistance with this matter.

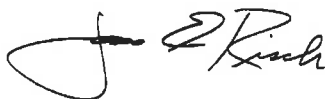
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator