



Fate of Secure Rural Schools Act Unclear

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The federal legislation that provides funding to rural school districts located in many of the nation's timber counties is set to expire in 2011. Whether or not it will be renewed is uncertain as Congress wrangles over the budget process.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) provides funding to districts to offset some of the loss of timber revenues in counties with national forests. First authorized in 2000, the Secure Rural Schools Act was an attempt to help counties and schools adjust to dramatic decreases in funding resulting from restrictions on timbering in National Forests located in their jurisdictions. The Act was renewed in 2008.

About \$419 million in SRS funding will be allocated in 2010 to 729 rural counties, parishes, and boroughs in 41 states. The funding will reach some 9 million rural students.

Supporters argue that the SRS provides revenue necessary for maintaining roads and essential services and supporting schools in rural forest counties. Many of these counties are relatively high-poverty and have few sources of taxable wealth. Critics say the SRS was intended to be a short-term transition for affected counties.

For more information, visit the website of the [Partnership for Rural America](#), which advocates for funding for the SRS.

Read more from the September 2010 [Rural Policy Matters](#).

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