



Office of the Mayor
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January 27, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
120 4th Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the City and Borough of Juneau, I offer our support for House Joint Resolution 5, seeking reinstatement of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act).

The SRS Act has significantly benefited Southeast Alaska, providing much-needed funding to offset revenue losses from reduced timber harvesting on federal lands. Rural communities like ours have historically depended on payments made to sustain critical public services and infrastructure. The program's expiration in January 2025 poses a significant challenge for local governments already facing fiscal constraints. Reinstating and making this funding mechanism permanent would provide long-term stability and security for communities heavily impacted by federal land ownership.

Thank you for your efforts to urge Congress to take swift action to reauthorize the SRS Act retroactively and make its funding mechanism permanent. I strongly support this undertaking. Your advocacy is critical to maintaining the prosperity and resilience of Alaska's rural communities.

Sincerely,

Beth Weldon
Mayor of the City and Borough of Juneau

Cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Nick Begich, U.S. Representative



CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

205 Brueger Street, Wrangell, Alaska 99929

Telephone: (907) 874-2381

Email: mfvillarma@wrangell.com

Office of the Borough Manager

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the City and Borough of Wrangell, we strongly support House Joint Resolution 5, urging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to reinstate the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act) and make its funding mechanism permanent.

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act has been a cornerstone for sustaining vital services in rural communities like Wrangell, which are heavily impacted by federal landownership and the decline of timber-related revenues. Over the years, the SRS Act has provided essential funding for education, road maintenance, public safety, and other critical infrastructure.

In fiscal year 2023 alone, Alaska received \$12.6 million through this program, benefiting municipalities, boroughs, and regional educational attendance areas across the state, including Wrangell. The program's expiration in January 2025 creates immediate and significant challenges for local governments already facing limited economic opportunities and fiscal constraints. Without this support, the ability of communities to maintain public services is at serious risk.

HJR 5 aptly highlights the urgency of reinstating this program retroactively to ensure stability in rural budgets while advocating for a permanent funding mechanism to provide long-term predictability and security. We join the Alaska State Legislature in urging swift action from Congress to reauthorize the SRS Act and uphold its legacy of supporting communities like Wrangell, which depend on this funding to thrive.

We deeply appreciate your leadership and advocacy on this matter of critical importance to rural Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Gilbert".

Mayor Patricia Gilbert
City and Borough of Wrangell

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mason F. Villarma".

Mason Villarma
Borough Manager
City and Borough of Wrangell

cc:

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Nick Begich, U.S. Representative



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

1900 First Avenue, Suite 115, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

• Telephone: (907) 228-6605 • Fax (907) 228-6697

Office of the Borough Mayor

January 22, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough, I offer our support for House Joint Resolution 5; seeking reinstatement of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS Act). This program is vital for ensuring that rural communities like ours can continue to provide a quality education for our children.

The SRS Act has been a lifeline for Southeast Alaska, providing much-needed funding to offset revenue losses from reduced timber harvesting on federal lands. The program's expiration in January 2025 poses a significant challenge for local governments already facing fiscal constraints. Reinstating and making this funding mechanism permanent would provide long-term stability and security for communities heavily impacted by federal land ownership.

I strongly support your efforts to urge Congress to take swift action to reauthorize the SRS Act retroactively and make its funding mechanism permanent. Your advocacy is critical to maintaining the well-being and resilience of Alaska's rural communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rodney Dial", is shown on a light green rectangular background.

Rodney Dial

Mayor, Ketchikan Gateway Borough

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Nick Begich, U.S. Representative

Good Morning, Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Hanson, and I serve as the Superintendent of Craig City School District. I have dedicated over 20 years to education in our great state, am a longtime resident of Prince of Wales Island, personally built my home in Craig, my husband is a retired Alaskan teacher, and my two sons, now graduates, proudly received an Alaska public school education.

I strongly support House Joint Resolution 5, advocating for continued federal funding of the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) Program, which is vital in Southeast Alaska. In addition to supporting various community and public services, these funds play a key role in sustaining and enhancing educational services, supporting school operations, and enriching student programs in communities with limited local revenue. With much of our land federally managed, local funding options are limited. On the education front specifically, SRS funding is essential to school districts in Southeast Alaska, helping schools provide students with a high-quality education.

HJR 5 reaffirms Alaska's commitment to ensuring our rural communities receive the necessary resources to provide strong educational programs and essential student as well as community services.

Thank you,

Jackie Hanson

Superintendent, Craig City School District

2.12.25

P.O. Box 800

Craig, AK 99921

907.826.3274 ext. 4003



January 21, 2025

Honorable Senator Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Sullivan
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Representative Begich
153 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Representative Begich,

On behalf of the 3,367 residents in the Petersburg Borough in Alaska, we urge the reauthorization of the *Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2023*, extending it through 2026 and ensuring that local governments in forested counties continue to have a crucial reliable funding stream.

The SRS program provides critical funding to national forest counties to finance numerous critical services, including infrastructure, conservation projects, search and rescue missions, fire prevention programs and education services. In Petersburg, we rely on SRS funds to maintain high quality education services in our local schools and to maintain our road system. If Congress fails to renew its long-standing federal obligation to forest counties and the lands managed by the federal government by not reauthorizing the SRS program, the Petersburg Borough and over 700 similar counties across the United States would face dramatic budgetary shortfalls. Authorization for SRS last lapsed in FY 2016 and as a result federal forest payments to counties decreased by over 80 percent.

Historically, rural counties have relied on a share of receipts from local timber harvests to supplement local funding for education services and roads. During the 1980s, national policies substantially diminished the revenue-generating activity permitted on these forests. The resulting steep decline in timber sales decreased the revenues that rural counties and school districts received from forest management activities. In response to this decline, SRS was first enacted in 2000 to stabilize payments to counties and compensate for lost revenues.

SRS was last reauthorized on February 15, 2021, for FYs 2021 through 2023. In April 2023, the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management distributed \$270 million to over 700 counties, parishes and boroughs. In April 2024, the U.S. Forest Service announced \$232 million in SRS funds to be distributed to counties. Ensuring these funds continue to be distributed to federal forest counties will allow counties to fund essential government services fully – those mandated by federal and state laws – such as education, emergency services, transportation infrastructure and law enforcement.

Thank you for your continued service to the Petersburg Borough and our residents. We appreciate your partnership and respectfully ask that you swiftly reauthorize the Secure Rural School program through 2026.

Respectfully,

Mark Jensen, Mayor
Petersburg Borough, Alaska