

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action: Be Adopted
Vote: 4 - 0 - 1
Yeas: Cowan, Gilliam, Gilman, Roblan
Nays: 0
Exc.: Barnhart
Prepared By: Marjorie Taylor, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 2/6, 2/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Expresses support for all rural Oregonians and urges support for reauthorization and extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Status of reauthorization of Public Law 106-393
- Possible effect on counties of the loss of federal funds
- Need for stable long-term funding
- Public lands in rural counties
- Natural resources and their management

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: Congress enacted the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-393) to stabilize payments to counties for schools and roads, and to improve forest ecosystems. Historically, Congress has shared revenue generated from federal forest lands with local governments in recognition of the fact that federal ownership of forestlands deprives counties of revenue they would have if the land were privately owned and that counties also provide services that benefit this land. As compensation for the land being exempt from taxation and for local services, Congress shares a portion of the revenue from its forestland.

In October 2007, the House Interim Committee on Rural Policy toured eastern Oregon to hear from county officials about their concerns relating to the possible loss of funds from P.L. 106-393. At each stop, elected officials and county staff acknowledged limited funds for government services in general, but all were quick to explain how they work hard to spend wisely or use creative partnerships to provide services. The two most common themes heard along the way were the need for more economic development and the importance of natural resources to rural communities.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.