

Lane County Sheriff's Office

Thomas M. Turner, Sheriff



DATE: February 15, 2015
TO: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
FROM: Tom Turner, Lane County Sheriff
RE: SB 26, relating to patrolling by county law enforcement officials

Dear Chairman Hass and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 26 is an important piece of legislation for the Lane County Office of the Sheriff, and indeed to each of the seven county Sheriff's to which it applies. I urge you to hold a work session on this bill and move it to the floor of the Senate with a DO PASS recommendation. The bill is simple; it removes the upcoming sunset on allowing certain Oregon Counties to transfer federal timber revenues from their road fund for the purposes of patrolling roads in those counties.

Under federal law, 25% of timber sales on US National Forests is allocated to counties, with 75% of that revenue to be used for the purposes of public roads, "to be expended as the State or Territorial legislature may prescribe..." Senate Bill 808 (2007) was signed into law by then Governor Theodore Kulongoski. This measure contained a section that allowed both Douglas County and Lane County to transfer "moneys described in ORS 294.060" (refers to the revenues from the sale of timber harvested from US National Forests within those counties which were historically deposited into their road funds) to be used by their respective Sheriff's Departments for the purposes of patrolling of county roads. The state law allowing this transfer has been updated several times, and now a total of seven counties have this authority (Coos, Curry, Douglas, Josephine, Klamath, Lane, Linn).

SB 808 was one of the first pieces of legislation adopted by the Oregon Legislature to address counties which were faced with fiscal distress due to the sunset of the federal Secure Rural Schools Act. In fact, that Act was reauthorized in October of 2008 to run through 2012 with annual rampdowns of 5%. It was reauthorized twice more for one year periods but the 113th Congress was not able to pass a reauthorization. As a result, timbered counties in Oregon are in a similar situation now as we were in the 2007 session and road fund transfers continue to be a critical tool for us in this uncertain time.

The following table describes the actual transfers undertaken by Lane County and approved by the budget committee and compares these amounts to the amount of Road Fund revenue in those years from federal forest payments (SRS).

Lane County Fiscal Years	Total Transfer	Total Road Fund from SRS	Transfer percentile
FY 2008-FY 2015	\$18,815,970	\$97,887,104	19.22%