

# A-Engrossed House Joint Memorial 1

Ordered by the House May 9  
Including House Amendments dated May 9

Sponsored by Representative SMITH DB; Representative EVANS (Pre-session filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

*[Urges President and Congress to pursue Oregon and California Railroad grant land management reforms.]*

**Urges Congress to pass Forest Management for Rural Stability Act.**

## JOINT MEMORIAL

1  
2 To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United  
3 States of America, in Congress assembled:

4 We, your memorialists, the Eightieth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative  
5 session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

6 Whereas national forests, re-vested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands (O&C lands) and  
7 other lands owned by the United States make up nearly 53 percent of the land base in the State of  
8 Oregon, yet those federal lands pay no property taxes to support local government services or  
9 schools; and

10 Whereas national forests and O&C lands were made subject to federal legislation in 1908, 1911  
11 and 1937 that required the federal government to share proceeds from timber sales to help support  
12 counties and schools, and for many decades shared federal timber receipts were a substantial con-  
13 tributor to the economic well-being of communities, local governments and schools; and

14 Whereas environmental concerns and changing national priorities in the 1990s resulted in  
15 drastic reductions in timber harvests from national forests and O&C lands, with correspondingly  
16 drastic reductions in payments to counties and schools in Oregon and more than 40 other states,  
17 creating severe funding shortages for many counties and schools; and

18 Whereas United States Senator Ron Wyden from Oregon coauthored and was an original  
19 cosponsor of the bipartisan Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000  
20 (SRS), which honored the federal government's historic commitment to rural communities where the  
21 federal government holds land, establishing a payment formula for counties and schools that had  
22 previously received revenue-sharing payments from national forests and O&C lands; and

23 Whereas SRS has brought more than \$3.1 billion to Oregon counties and schools-to keep teach-  
24 ers in classrooms, sheriffs on the job and roads in good repair-but the annual payments under SRS  
25 have declined in recent years, and the law has expired and been extended several times; and

26 Whereas each reauthorization of SRS has been increasingly difficult due to the political envi-  
27 ronment in Congress, resulting in great uncertainty and instability in the budgeting processes of  
28 counties and schools; and

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted.  
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1       Whereas SRS is currently expired, and no payment will be made for fiscal year 2019 or there-  
2 after unless there is a reauthorization, again creating uncertainty and chaos in the budgeting pro-  
3 cesses of dependent local governments; and

4       Whereas Senator Wyden has recognized the need for a long-term solution that provides certainty  
5 and stability in payments to counties and schools and makes a dependable contribution to the sup-  
6 port of local communities; and

7       Whereas Senator Wyden coauthored and was an original cosponsor of the bipartisan Forest  
8 Management for Rural Stability Act (FMRSA), which was introduced in the Senate in 2018 and  
9 which Senator Wyden has stated he will reintroduce in 2019 and seek action on by Congress; and

10       Whereas FMRSA would greatly benefit counties and schools in more than 40 states, none more  
11 so than Oregon, providing guaranteed annual payments that are no less than the SRS payments for  
12 2017, which totaled more than \$96 million in Oregon, and the minimum would be adjusted upward  
13 each year in the future by the rate of inflation; and

14       Whereas FMRSA would employ a bold and creative mechanism to ensure permanent payments  
15 to counties and schools by initially funding an endowment that would be invested and managed for  
16 the benefit of counties and schools and into which any shared timber receipts also would be depos-  
17 ited over time, from which annual payments would be made to counties and schools based on  
18 endowment fund deposits and earnings; and

19       Whereas FMRSA is supported by the Association of Oregon Counties, the Association of O&C  
20 Counties, the National Association of Counties, the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition  
21 and many other entities, each of which recognizes the need for a modern and permanent version of  
22 SRS that would create certainty and predictability and would satisfy that need without severing the  
23 links between communities and their nearby federal forest lands; now, therefore,

24 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

25       That we, the members of the Eightieth Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the Congress of  
26 the United States to pass, and the President to sign, the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act  
27 before the close of federal fiscal year 2019; and be it further

28       Resolved, That a copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to  
29 the Senate Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and to each member  
30 of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

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