



NEWS

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Herger Cosponsors Measure to Extend Rural Schools and Roads Funding Legislation

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - Congressman Herger joined a bipartisan House delegation today in introducing legislation (H.R. 17) to extend the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 for an additional six years. The "Secure Rural Schools" program was designed to temporarily stabilize National Forest payments to county schools and road departments, which had fallen dramatically as federal forest management projects declined.

"Public schools and road safety programs have been devastated by declining timber receipts from the National Forests," Congressman Herger stated. "Secure Rural Schools established a much-needed temporary safety net to help rural counties cope with the loss. Reauthorization of this important program is needed until we are able to return to actively managing our forests."

In 2000, Congressman Herger worked with local county leaders and school superintendents to enact the Secure Rural Schools program. Under the law, the Second Congressional District received approximately \$25 million annually for public schools, road maintenance, and forest restoration projects. Siskiyou, Trinity, Shasta, Tehama, Butte, Glenn, Colusa, and Yuba Counties each received their final funding under Secure Rural Schools program this past December. In order to continue the temporary forest payments, Congress must reauthorize the law and provide funding for the program.

"As important as this program is, our long term objective remains a return to active forest management," Herger emphasized. "Our forests face an environmental crisis of major proportions. A lack of management has left historically spacious and diverse stands over-crowded and susceptible to unnatural mega-fires and devastating disease and insect infestation. Communities and watersheds are at grave risk as a result. Managing the forest will protect people and forest ecosystems, improve rural economies, and return crucial schools and roads funding to our area."

For more information, please visit <http://www.house.gov/herger> on the Internet!