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July 12, 2017

United States Congress  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of our three million members and the 50 million students they serve, we would like to bring to your attention a critical issue that has yet to be resolved: renewing and funding the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act, which supports education and other essential services in 775 rural counties located near national forests in 41 states. SRS payments are based on historic precedent and 1908 agreements that removed federal lands from local tax bases and community economic activity.

Since September 2015, when the law expired, the affected communities have been relying on reserve funds. Those funds are now completely exhausted, and the communities are facing draconian cuts in basic services ranging from education to snow removal. Workers are being laid off from their jobs. Students are losing opportunities for a well-rounded education. Lives may even be lost due to the shortage of emergency crews.

The affected communities did not create these problems, nor can they solve them. The need for congressional action is **immediate and urgent**. We urge you to support renewal of — and funding for — the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Self-Determination Act.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association