

Update on National Forest Funding

From: Lonnie Hunt

Sent: Mon, Feb 1, 2016 at 7:32 pm

To: Judge Allison Harbison, Judge Craig Doyal, Judge Danny Pierce, Judge Daryl Melton, Judge Doug Page, Judge Erin Ford, Judge John Lovett, Judge Mark Allen, Judge Mike Perry, Judge Ronnie Boyett, Judge Samye Johnson, Wes Suiter, Lonnie Hunt, Commissioner Mike Meador, Commissioner Tiger Worsham, Carole Martin, Clint Porterfield, Eddie Gray, Elizabeth Holloway, Jessica Corley, Joe Verhalen, Melinda Bryan, Melissa Mosley, Patricia Allen, Phyllis Martin, Renee Weaver, Sheila Johnson

Image001.jpg (5 KB) SRS Sample Letter Feb 2016.docx (20.6 KB)
SRS Pending Legislation Feb 2016.docx (20.8 KB) – **Download all**

Dear County Judges, Commissioners and Auditors,

Here's the latest update on our national forest funding. As you know, the last action by the Congress was to extend the Secure Rural Schools Funding for FY 2014 and FY 2015. You received the 2014 funds last year, and we are hopeful that the 2015 funds will be coming out fairly early this year. Of course, we are already into FY 2016, and once again we need action in Washington to extend the funding so that the 2015 check you receive won't be the last one.

The board of the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition (NFCSC) is coordinating and leading this effort on your behalf, and I am happy to say that both the National Association of Counties and the National Education Association are strong partners at the federal level. Our NFCSC board meets by conference call every other week, and we will be travelling to Washington later this month to make visits at the Capitol. If any of you are able to go, I would be thrilled to have you go with me. Our visits to the Capitol will be February 24 and 25. I appreciate Gene Terry for allowing me to go and do this, and when you run into Gene it wouldn't hurt to thank him for allowing it. He has always been very supportive of us, even though only 12 of the 254 counties in Texas are affected.

When I go to call on your congressman and senators, it will be MUCH more impactful if they have already heard from you. So I am asking you to contact them now and tell them again just how important the SRS funding is to your county and to the entire region. There is a sample letter attached which you may want to use as a guide. The best thing you could do would be to send the letter, then wait a few days and make a phone call and ask if they got your letter. The more contacts the better.

Also, please look for opportunities to see your congressmen in person, as they will be campaigning for re-election. Take any and every opportunity to remind them about this issue.

I have also attached is a summary of SRS bills that were introduced last year and are still pending at this time. We expect that the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will be drafting a new bill this year to deal with the forest management and fire prevention/response issues. We will focus on that bill when it is introduced. In addition, we will look for opportunities to attach the SRS funding extension to some other "larger" bill. Realistically, that is the only way we will get the funding extended in the current political environment. So for now, you just need to keep talking the issue up with your congressman and senators and make sure they understand how important it is to you.

<http://webmail.emailsrvr.com/versions/webmail/12.0.0-RC/popup.php?wsid=1b4f8c38369f...> 2/2/2016

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We also still need more of our school districts to get involved. I have only a few email addresses for school superintendents in the national forest schools. So please pass this information along to all of the superintendents in your county.

The NFCSC will soon be sending out invoices for annual dues. If you can please get these payments approved and sent in, that would be very helpful. The Coalition operates on a shoestring budget, with only one part-time paid person and all the volunteer help we can get. Membership dues are very low, so we need every one to pitch in their little part. Your county's membership dues are 1/10th of one percent of the amount of Title I funding you receive (multiply the Title I funding by 0.001). Using that formula and based on the 2014 payments, the dues for each county would be:

Angelina	\$117.07
Houston	\$383.55
Jasper	\$ 55.08
Montgomery	\$ 54.10
Nacogdoches	\$ 30.03
Newton	\$ 9.53
Sabine	\$333.68
San Augustine	\$188.97
San Jacinto	\$139.49
Shelby	\$191.83
Trinity	\$299.69
Walker	\$189.55

And one final reminder: Please do NOT forward this email to your congressman or senator. The information I send you is for your eyes only. Sometimes my emails to you may contain sensitive information or wording that your legislator does not need to see. Send them something original! It can be short and sweet – they'll know what you're talking about – but it needs to be your original comments to them.

Thanks!
Lonnie



LONNIE HUNT
County Relations Officer
Texas Association of Counties
1210 San Antonio, Austin, Texas 78701
Ph: 512-478-8753 | Cell: 936-544-6963
Website: www.county.org