

House Joint Memorial 1

Sponsored by Representatives SCOTT, MERKLEY, Senator BROWN; Senator FERRIOLI (at the request of Association of O and C Counties, Association of Oregon Counties, AFSCME Council 75, American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, Associated Oregon Loggers, Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon Education Association, Oregon Farm Bureau, Oregon Forest Industries Council, Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters, SEIU Local 503, OPEU)

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 **as introduced**.

Urges Congress to extend Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 through federal fiscal year 2016 and to fund Act with mandatory, continuing appropriation.

JOINT MEMORIAL

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

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-third Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

Whereas the revested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands and the reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands, which are now under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of the Interior and are managed by the Bureau of Land Management, were once in private ownership, but were returned to federal ownership in 1916 and 1919 and now comprise approximately 2.6 million acres of federal land in Oregon; and

Whereas Congress recognized that its decision to place the grant lands in federal ownership would deprive the Oregon counties where the grant lands are located of opportunities for economic development and of tax revenues they would receive if the grant lands were held in private ownership; and

Whereas the Oregon grant land counties have expended public funds year after year to provide services such as road construction and maintenance, search and rescue, law enforcement, waste removal and fire protection that directly benefit the grant lands and the people who use the grant lands; and

Whereas Congress in 1937 and 1953 enacted legislation that provided for payments to the Oregon grant land counties from revenues derived primarily from the sale of timber harvested from the grant lands; and

Whereas the Oregon grant land counties have relied for many years on the payments from the federal government to provide essential funding for schools, road maintenance and other critical public services; and

Whereas in recent years the principal source of these revenues, federal timber sales, has been sharply curtailed, resulting in significantly decreased payments to the Oregon grant land counties and adversely affecting funding for education, road maintenance and other public programs and services; and

Whereas Congress recognized this trend and temporarily ameliorated the adverse consequences by enacting the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, which pro-

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 vides annual safety net payments through 2006 to the Oregon grant land counties in lieu of pay-
2 ments from revenues derived from the sale of timber harvested from the grant lands; and

3 Whereas the authority for these safety net payments will expire in 2006, and, if that occurs,
4 payments thereafter will be based on actual federal timber receipts, causing Oregon to lose more
5 than \$230 million per year in payments for schools and counties under the current Act, with asso-
6 ciated losses of essential programs and services and thousands of jobs in both the public and private
7 sectors, and causing Oregon to lose an additional \$26 million per year that is currently spent by the
8 Oregon grant land counties on special projects under the Act, for a total loss of more than \$512
9 million per biennium, most of which is currently allocated to programs and services that the State
10 of Oregon cannot fund otherwise; and

11 Whereas there is a need to maintain funding for education, road maintenance and other public
12 services through receipt of predictable payments, as well as through job creation and other oppor-
13 tunities associated with the restoration, maintenance and stewardship of the grant lands in those
14 counties; now, therefore,

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

16 That we, the members of the Seventy-third Legislative Assembly, respectfully urge the Congress
17 of the United States to pass legislation that will reauthorize and extend the Secure Rural Schools
18 and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 for an additional 10-year period through federal fiscal
19 year 2016, and that the Act be continued in its present form and be funded through a mandatory,
20 continuing appropriation; and be it further

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

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