

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3704

September 24, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi,  
Minority Leader Boehner,  
Majority Leader Reid,  
Minority Leader McConnell,

I am writing to thank you for your ongoing efforts to extend important tax provisions. I want to reiterate my strong support for the inclusion in any final tax bill of the Senate-passed four-year reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, as well as Senate provisions providing for full funding of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program.

Many rural counties across the country have already been forced to make dramatic cuts to their budgets, harming public health and safety, education and transportation. Further, in light of the current economic crisis, it is critical that these rural communities, which are disproportionately affected by rising fuel prices and declining housing markets, receive immediate assistance. The four-year reauthorization would also allow rural communities to develop an effective, long-term economic plan.

The Senate has shown strong, bipartisan support for the Secure Rural Schools Program and PILT, voting by a margin of 74-23 to include funding for these programs in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for FY2007. It is imperative that the Congress provide immediate assistance to the rural communities that must bear the economic burden of the public lands that we all enjoy. These communities should no longer have to make difficult funding decisions to the detriment of teachers, policemen and other vital members of the community.

I look forward to working with you in the coming days to address this issue and ensure that the health, safety and economic vitality of our nation's rural economies are preserved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. H. Smith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gordon H. Smith  
United States Senate