



National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition

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2009 – 2012 NFCSC Legislative Position Statement

NFCSC is a Unique and Successful National Organization

The National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition is one of the leading organizations devoted to preserving and strengthening the economic, physical, and social infrastructure of rural America through support of the 1908 Act as amended by the SRSCA and the 1937 O&C Act and using **balanced and scientifically sound management** of our federal forest lands. Recent studies conducted at Loyola University in Chicago indicate, “That there are 757 counties in America that contain national forest land. More than 66.1 million people resided in those counties in 2000, some 23.5 percent of the U.S. total. Over 10 million children attend public schools in these counties.” Clearly the Administration and the Congress of the United States have an obligation to continue their over 100 year commitment to the communities and schools of the National Forest Counties of America by protecting essential infrastructure and education through appropriate mitigation legislation and regulations.

For over a decade our principles have remained intact and we have not deviated from the long- and short-term goals embedded in those principles. While we have had far greater success achieving our short-term goals (the SRSCA Safety Net), we also continue to advocate for strengthening our local economies and communities as a result of increased activity from management of our national forest lands. As we strive to explore traditional and new technological opportunities to expand our economies, we must simultaneously recognize the ongoing importance of the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Act in keeping the essential infrastructure of rural America functioning.

Maintaining and Renewing the Secure Rural Schools and Communities Act

The inability of rural counties and public schools to maintain essential services and infrastructure without SRSCA, and the time it takes to achieve a reauthorization of a major piece of legislation, the National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition will immediately begin the reauthorization advocacy process.

- We will actively advocate with our supporters in Congress and the Administration, new legislation to renew and extend SRSCA prior to its expiration in 2011, to include building upon the momentum and successes achieved by Resource Advisory Committees all across America under Title II or SRSCA.
- We will initiate our legislative agenda, and be prepared to respond in a timely manner.
- We will support NACo in securing full funding of Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILT).

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Long Term Economic Development

With respect to new and traditional economic opportunities, the NFCSC will pursue regulation and legislative changes that create or expand economic development opportunities for forest county communities and citizens through management of our federal forests. We will include strong support for:

- The sustainable multiple-use management of our federal lands in order to increase jobs and revenue.
- Economic incentives that include biomass from Federal Lands for the production of renewable energy and bio-fuels
- Laws, regulations, and programs that create opportunities for active participation of forest county communities in the emerging renewable energy economy.
- Laws and regulations to require State and Federal Government Projects to grant mandatory "Preferred Material Status" to wood and wood products that were grown, harvested, and manufactured in the United States as a means of protecting our remaining industrial infrastructure and the family wage earner jobs it provides.
- Laws and regulations that promote and protect the long-term sustainable health of our National Forests, watersheds, and wildlife.