

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4

INTRODUCED BY CURTISS, BALES, VINCENT, HEINERT, GEBHARDT

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE THE SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT AND WORK TOWARD A PERMANENT SOLUTION TO COMPENSATE STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR LOST TAX REVENUE ON FEDERAL LAND WITHIN MONTANA.

WHEREAS, the stability of Montana's economy has historically been dependent on use of our abundant natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the natural resource harvest has historically contributed billions of dollars to Montana's economy by providing employment opportunities to members of our communities, supporting our business communities, and contributing to the health of our schools; and

WHEREAS, revenue from industries related to the natural resource harvest has produced taxes for the support of local and state governments; and

WHEREAS, the amount of money generated by national forests has dropped more than 85% between 1986 and 2005, creating a financial crisis for rural forest communities in Montana and around the country; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 to provide a safety net for these communities, and the purpose of the Act was to stabilize payments to states and counties to help support roads and schools, provide projects that enhance forest ecosystem health, provide employment opportunities, and improve cooperative relationships among federal land management agencies and those who use and care about the lands that the agencies manage; and

WHEREAS, counties in Montana received more than \$14 million in the last year to maintain schools and roads; and

WHEREAS, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act has expired; and

WHEREAS, if the Act is not reauthorized, many counties will suffer severe financial impacts resulting in significant reduction in services, including but not limited to public safety and education.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

(1) That the Legislature of the State of Montana urge the U.S. Congress to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 and work toward a permanent solution to compensate states and local governments for lost tax revenue on federal land within Montana.

(2) That the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Western Governors' Association, and the Montana Congressional Delegation.

- END -