

Chris Taggart

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To: 'commissioner@co.granite.mt.us'; 'mccommissioners@co.mineral.mt.us';
'bcc@missoulacounty.us'; Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: RELEASE: As Rural Montana Counties Struggle Amid Pandemic, Tester Pushes Bipartisan Bill to Reauthorize Critical Source of Funding

Hello Commissioners:

I wanted you to see that Senator Tester is working hard to extend SRS funding for your counties. Please call or email me if you have any questions.

Best wishes,

Deborah

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Subject: RELEASE: As Rural Montana Counties Struggle Amid Pandemic, Tester Pushes Bipartisan Bill to Reauthorize Critical Source of Funding



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2021

As Rural Montana Counties Struggle Amid Pandemic, Tester Pushes Bipartisan Bill to Reauthorize Critical Source of Funding

Senator: "I'll keep pushing to ensure this critical program is extended well into the future so that Montana's rural counties have the tools they need to thrive"

(U.S. Senate) – U.S. Senator Jon Tester is pushing a bipartisan bill to reauthorize a critical program that provides resources for essential services like law enforcement, emergency response, roads, and education in rural counties across Montana.

Tester’s bill would extend the *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS)* - which compensates forested counties for lost revenue due to declining timber production on federal lands, and provides resources to more than two dozen Montana counties to help fund schools, roads, jails, and other essential services - for two years.

“Rural counties in Montana rely on these resources to fund everything from law enforcement to roads and schools, and as counties continue responding to the COVID-19 pandemic that funding is more important than ever,” Tester said. **“I’ll keep pushing to ensure this critical program is extended well into the future so that Montana’s rural counties have the tools they need to thrive.”**

Tester’s bill would also make several positive changes to SRS, including allowing funds to be used to expand broadband connectivity at schools.

Tester is a longtime champion of SRS, and [secured two years of SRS funding in 2019](#) after Congress let the program lapse in 2016, a move Tester railed against and [successfully fought to reverse](#).

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