Kathleen Driscoll

From: max@baucus.senate.gov
Sent: Wednesday, May 07, 2008 10:28 AM
To: Kathleen Driscoll
Subject: Responding to your message

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Dear Kathleen:

Thank you for contacting me concerning the Secure Rural Schools Program. I appreciate hearing from you on this important issue.

Secure Rural Schools is a mandatory spending program that compensates counties with high percentages of federal land for the counties' lack of tax base. This program was authorized in 1999, and expired in 2006. Congress extended the program for a year in May 2007, but we are fast approaching the end of that extension. Now, I am fighting for a long term extension of the program.

I drafted a four year extension of the program that would make the funding distribution formula more equitable for Montana. Current funding is determined by an out-dated formula based on a state's historic timber production from 1986-1990. This is unfair to Montana, where the best timber years were in the 1970's.

I am working to secure a more equal funding distribution based on a number of different factors that would secure funding for the neediest counties, and increase Montana's payment. I am also working to secure mandatory spending for PILT, payment in lieu of taxes, which would provide a more stable funding source for counties, and allow them to plan a few years ahead.

Thanks again for sharing your concerns on this issue. Rest assured that I will work hard to pass a long term extension of the secure rural schools program.

With best personal regards, I am

Senator Max Baucus

http://baucus.senate.gov