

## Tehama County urges Congress to finance tax mitigation programs

By Rich Greene , Daily News

RedBluffDailyNews.com

Red Bluff >> Tehama County is joining with other rural California counties in calling for a pair of federal mitigation programs to be returned to full funding.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a pair of resolutions at its Feb. 3 meeting urging the U.S. Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the Federal Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS) and the Federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes Programs (PILT).

Both programs are in place to mitigate loss of tax revenue due to federal ownership of land.

The adopted resolutions come before a scheduled trip by Supervisor Bob Williams to Washington D.C. later this week as part of the National Association of Counties Conference.

Williams said the resolutions will be presented to federal legislators.

The Rural County Representatives of California have been urging the 34 counties they represent to pass similar resolutions.

The SRS program expired at the end of the 2013 fiscal year.

The county's last payment received from the program was for \$1.044 million in March 2014.

The SRS program was created to mitigate for the impact of timber harvesting production on forest lands. Counties used the money to support public schools and road programs.

"SRS funding is critical to Tehama County's ability to provide for our residents and its immediate reauthorization should be of the utmost priority for Congress," Williams said. "In addition, it is time to look at a long-term stable funding source for forested counties and schools to maintain vital programs and avoid an interruption in services and operations.

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The county's share of PILT funds increased from \$426,069 to \$530,446 from 2013 to 2014.

The PILT program was reauthorized for 2015 funding, however the county has not received notification on how much funding it will receive.

Congress authorized \$450 million in federal funding to the program for 2015.

Chairman Burt Bundy called the programs an "ongoing and endless battle" for Tehama County.

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