

February 8, 2007

Dear Colleague:

The President has again proposed to sell 270,000 acres of National Forest System lands in 35 states in his FY 2008 budget proposal. The Secure Rural Schools program needs to be properly funded, but selling our irreplaceable public lands is not the answer. I urge you to join us in opposition to this proposal.

If you would like to sign onto the letter or if you have further questions, please contact Jim Creevy (Chandler) at jim.creevy@mail.house.gov or Andrew Forbes (Keller) at andrew.forbes@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Ben Chandler
Member of Congress

Ric Keller
Member of Congress

February XX, 2007

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
B71 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

We are writing to urge you to oppose the Administration's recent proposal to sell vast tracts of our national forests and find alternative funding for any extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act in the Fiscal Year 2008 Congressional Budget Resolution. This proposal is similar to one offered last year by the Administration but rejected by Congress.

The Administration's FY 2008 Budget proposes to sell some 270,000 acres of National Forest System lands in 35 states and using half the revenues to fund a four-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. This program provides support to rural schools across America, but we strongly oppose the false choice embodied in the Administration's proposal.

Selling parcels of our national forests provides at best a temporary solution to funding the Secure Rural Schools program. Furthermore, this proposal would set a dangerous

precedent if enacted. Congress should not develop the habit of selling treasured public lands to the highest bidder as a means of temporarily plugging gaps in the budget.

Our national forests provide recreation for millions of citizens a year in the form of hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, swimming, boating, skiing and enjoying the serenity of the outdoors. The forests are also important for watershed purposes and provide habitat for thousands of species. If we sell this land it will be gone forever, and we will still not have found a permanent source of funding for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

We urge you to craft a budget that protects our public lands and finds alternative funding sources for any extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

Sincerely,

Ben Chandler
Member of Congress

Ric Keller
Member of Congress