

FACT SHEET

- In the early 1990s, the U.S. Government developed a policy that reduced harvesting of timber on federal lands by more than 85 percent. The result was the loss of thousands of jobs in the wood products industry as well as the beginning of a diminution of funds to operate county services and maintain the roads and schools in these timber dependent counties.
- In 2000, recognizing the harm from the new federal timber policies, Congress enacted the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (PL 106-393). This legislation benefitted more than 700 counties and thousands of schools in 39 states with federally-owned forest lands. Under the Act, counties and schools received monies from the U.S. Treasury to make up for the loss of shared timber receipts. The Act was extended by PL 110-343, and is now scheduled to end at the close of FFY 2011. During the final year of the current legislation (FFY 2011), payments to Oregon schools and counties will decline to about 40 percent of earlier payment levels, and then will cease altogether after 2011. After FFY 2011, unless the Act is reauthorized, counties and schools will revert back to receiving shared timber receipts, which are currently at extremely low levels and expected to stay at very low levels for years to come.
- Many rural counties are extremely dependent on the funds provided under PL 110-343. If the Act is allowed to proceed to its final year, payments to Oregon counties will drop precipitously. If the Act is not extended past its sunset date, the counties will then receive only a share of timber receipts, which would be much, much smaller than the amounts they receive under the Act.
- This will result in the huge decrease of funds for critical services such as community safety, roads, health services, and schools. Counties will be unable to provide services at levels necessary to sustain their communities.
- In addition, the decline and loss of PL 110-343 would cost Oregon communities THOUSANDS of JOBS!! Oregon already suffers from one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, and the rural O&C counties have unemployment rates that are even worse than the State average. As we struggle to emerge from this crippling recession, we cannot tolerate additional job losses.
- Please look at the enclosed charts showing the dollar losses for Oregon and your county, and how this translates into job losses. The impact of this further loss of family wage jobs would be extremely painful, especially for areas already struggling with very high unemployment. Retail stores, financial institutions and other businesses would be significantly, adversely impacted.