



Committee on Natural Resources U.S. House of Representatives

Chairman Doc Hastings

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Hastings: Full SRS Funding is Victory for Rural Counties that Faced Uncertainty Due to Obama Admin. Political Games

WASHINGTON, D.C. – House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04) issued the following statement on the announcement by the U.S. Department of Agriculture on its plans to distribute the FY 2013 Secure Rural School (SRS) payments in full.

“Today’s announcement is a victory for rural counties that have been faced with uncertainty of whether they would have enough funds to pay for schools, police officers, and emergency services. For nearly a year the Obama Administration has played political games with these funds, threatening retribution towards states that didn’t repay. I’ve sought answers from this Administration on why the White House made the original decision to retroactively apply the sequester against the judgment and counsel of USDA attorneys. The Administration continues to withhold documents, but I’m pleased that rural communities that depend on these funds finally have some assurance and hopefully will no longer have to endure retroactive cuts to this vital funding.”

Last year, the Obama Administration decided to retroactively apply 2013 sequestration cuts to the 2012 SRS funds and requested repayment of \$17.9 million that had already been distributed to states and counties. This action immediately sparked bipartisan opposition and the House Committee on Natural Resources has been conducting thorough [oversight](#). The Committee’s investigation found that the White House ordered the sequestration cuts for the SRS program and that Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack decided to apply the cuts so all states receiving SRS money felt the pain of sequestration. At a Natural Resources Committee hearing earlier this year, the Administration [stated](#) that it was still considering withholding the sequestered amounts from the FY 2013 payments for states that did not repay the funds. Chairman Hastings sent [letters](#) to the USDA in February and again in March objecting to this proposal and demanding that the USDA release the full FY 2013 payments without delay.

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