



# DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**TOM KRESS    TIM FREEMAN    CHRIS BOICE**

Douglas County Courthouse, Room 217  
1036 SE Douglas Avenue, Roseburg, Oregon 97470

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HARD WORK IS PAYING OFF**

(Douglas County, Ore.) The Douglas County Board of Commissioners are very excited to announce that their hard work over the last several years with the Oregon Congressional Delegation in Washington, D.C. and other congressional members across the country is paying off for the citizens of Douglas County. Today, President Biden signed the roughly \$1.2 trillion bi-partisan infrastructure finance bill called the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Locally, the biggest win with the new infrastructure finance bill is the renewal of secure funding levels, along with much-needed amendments for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program for the next three years. The amendments will in essence create a pathway for counties to get back on regular and consistent timber receipt payments.

Over 700 counties in 40 U.S. States rely on the desperately needed SRS funding to fund vital county services. Douglas County receives the largest portion of the SRS funding in the nation, and is set to receive approximately \$8.8 million from the O&C forest lands portion because of the 1937 O&C Act\* and another estimated \$6.48 million on the four National Forest Lands within our boundaries. The approval for the SRS funding is critical to Douglas County residents, as it provides for vital services that otherwise would not be funded, these include services provided by the Sheriff's Office, 911 Communications, Senior Services, Veteran Services and Public Works – Road and Bridges. The SRS funding renewal is the direct result of the work the Douglas County Board of Commissioners do when they engage in face-to-face meetings with our Federal elected officials. It is important to understand that without these meetings, and their concerted efforts to educate and discuss O&C timber and other crucial issues with our leaders at the national level, these dollars would not be coming back to our communities.

*“The reauthorization of SRS funding is a big win for Douglas County and our residents. It is very welcome news for us and many other counties and schools across the U.S. struggling financially to provide services. Now that these funds are approved, we can focus 100% of our efforts on responsible Federal Forest management,”* stated Commissioner Tim Freeman.

Over half of Douglas County's 5,000 square miles is under the control and management of the Federal Government, primarily the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This means the County does not receive property tax revenue from these lands to help pay for county services. Within their respective agencies there are several different categories of land, each with a unique formula for sharing receipts with the County. There are parts of four National Forests in Douglas County, the Umpqua, Willamette, Rogue Siskiyou, and the Siuslaw. There are also four BLM Districts with O&C land within the County's boundaries. In addition, the County contains Public Domain Land, Coos Bay Wagon Road Land, and Controverted Land. The receipt sharing formulas from these Federal Lands is very complex, and is always subject to change as the result of Federal Legislation.

Given that the Federal Forest revenues represent a significant portion of Douglas County's budget, it is vitally important that the Douglas County Commissioners stay current on all issues that impact these receipt payments. It requires our Commissioners to regularly and actively engage in communication and consultation with our Oregon Congressional Delegation, other states that also receive Federal Forest receipts, as well as National Organizations, like the [National Forest Counties and Schools Coalition](#) and the [National Association of Counties](#). Douglas County's participation also includes testifying before Congress, regularly meeting with Agency personnel on all levels, and monitoring all of the processes regarding the calculation of sharing receipts. The Douglas County Board of Commissioners do all of this work to ensure that Douglas County receives all of the federal payments it is entitled to receive. Douglas County will receive an estimated \$51.6 million total in SRS funding for all titles, including funding for local schools from this bill over the next three years, as a direct result of our Commissioners' concerted efforts.

*\*The Oregon and California Railroad Revested Lands, known as the O&C Forest Lands, lie in a checkerboard pattern through eighteen counties of western Oregon. The 1937 O&C Act requires 50% of receipts collected from the sale of timber on O&C lands to be distributed among eighteen counties in western Oregon. The payments follow a formula established by the June 9, 1916 Chamberlain- Ferris Act, the O&C Act requires timber receipts to be shared with western Oregon counties, and will continue to remain in effect following the expiration of the SRS and Community Self-Determination Act. For more information about O&C Forest Lands go to the [Association of O&C Counties webpage](#).*

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