

April 13, 2017

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Senator Dan Sullivan
Congressman Don Young

Subject: Secure Rural School Authorization and Funding

Greetings,

Alaska school funding is in crisis and the state's budget balance is not likely to improve in the near future. We appreciate your support for the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program, but now, more than ever, we need to see SRS reauthorized and funded by Congress. The Alaska Senate is threatening a five percent cut in the base student allocation that would cause a \$500,000 shortfall in our school's budget for next year. Flat funding and decreases seen in SRS funding have compounded the pressure seen with our school budget in recent years.

The Secure Rural Schools program was intended as a safety net for our communities, until such time the federal government could develop a long term, sustainable forest management system. Rural communities, surrounded by these federal forested lands, do not receive tax proceeds from this land and have little control with how it is managed. Secure Rural School funding is vital for the continued support of education and road programs in our community.

We ask that Congress continue its historic support of forested rural communities in two ways. First, secure reauthorization and adequate funding the SRS program when FY 2017 funding is finalized in April and secure SRS funding for the 2016-2017 funding cycle. Secondly, push the federal government to take meaningful steps to reform forest management practices that consider the effects of these federal lands have on communities located within their boundaries.

Valdez and other forested communities in our state are depending on your continued support and leadership. Please work to advance this issues with your colleagues. If there is anything we can do to assist you in this important effort, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ruth Knight".

Ruth Knight – Mayor
City of Valdez, Alaska