

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger (CA-02) today issued the following statement after the House of Representatives failed to pass H.R. 3058, a proposal to extend the Secure Rural Schools program. The otherwise noncontroversial legislation was hamstrung by the inclusion of a legally questionable funding provision forcing the Department of Interior to violate the Outer Continental Shelf leasing contracts it entered into in 1998-1999:

"The Secure Rural Schools safety net program is badly in need of reauthorization. Regrettably, the Speaker of the House insisted on including a controversial and legally questionable provision in H.R. 3058 that the Senate has rejected three times, and which the President has pledged to veto. Simply put, this bill has no chance of becoming law. Going down this failed road again does nothing to help counties and schools in Northern California.

"In addition, full funding for 'PILT,' a critical program that compensates counties for federal land ownership within their boundaries, was inexplicably removed from the legislation at the last minute. These changes threaten to undermine the diverse grassroots coalition and bipartisan congressional cooperation that has characterized the Secure Rural Schools program since its inception.

"Counties and schools in Northern California don't have time for false promises and false hope. They need and deserve leadership and an assurance that our legislative strategy in Congress will actually produce a law that will help them. I will continue to work with members on both sides of the aisle to reauthorize this critical program in a responsible and acceptable way."