Walden continues push for long-term county payments extension

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Two-year and five-year extensions proposed by Walden not allowed to be considered on House floor

Congressman Greg Walden again today addressed the House of Representatives on the need to immediately support a multi-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (county payments). Earlier in the morning, Congressman Walden offered two amendments to the House Rules Committee for a longer extension than the current one-year agreement already in the emergency supplemental bill that is expected to be approved and signed into law this week. During the committee hearing on the Walden amendments, both were voted down 9 to 4 with all Republicans voting for the amendments and all Democrats voting against.

â€œThe work to secure a long-term extension and reauthorization of these funds must continue,â€• Walden said on the House floor. â€œI will not give up. I will not quit. I will not rest. The Congress will be forced to address this issue over and over and over again until we reach agreement on a long-term solution.â€•

The first amendment Congressman Walden offered was identical to the five-year Wyden-Reid-Baucus-Bingaman amendment accepted 75-22 in the Senate on March 28. It would have funded county payments and fully funded the Payment In Lieu of Taxes program. The second amendment would have extended the emergency funding in the emergency supplemental bill for two years without increasing the overall cost of the bill or changing the funding distribution formula.

Congressman Walden and Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) introduced on the first day of the new Congress H.R. 17, a bill to reauthorize county payments for seven years that currently has 127 co-sponsors in the House. Walden has also tried to include funding solutions in the Democratsâ€™ 100-hour agenda, the continuing resolution to fund the federal government, and even in a housing finance reform bill that recently made its way through the House. Last week DeFazio and Walden gathered over 90 members to support a letter to the House and Senate emergency appropriations bill urging them to include language identical to the five-year Senate amendment. They have discussed this issue personally with Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader John Boehner. In addition, Walden and Senator Ron Wyden last week personally urged President George W. Bush at the White House to support on a long-term fix. During that visit, Walden discussed the same matter with First Lady Laura Bush.

Congressman Walden represents the people of Oregonâ€™s Second Congressional District, which is comprised of 20 counties in eastern, southern, and Central Oregon. He is a Deputy Whip in the House Leadership Structure, a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and a member of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

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