



Statement by Senator Feinstein on President's Plans to  
Sell-Off Over 85,000 Acres of California's National Forests  
February 10, 2006

**“This proposal is a terrible idea based on a misguided sense of priorities. First, the Administration is proposing to sell off our treasured public lands to help finance the President’s irresponsible budget. And second, the Administration plans to ratchet down and then terminate an important program that has been the life-blood for rural schools in California and many other states. I will do everything I can to defeat this effort.**

**I understand that between 400-500 parcels totaling over 85,000 acres in 16 different National Forests have been identified by the Bush Administration for possible sale in California. If the Forest Service truly does not want these parcels, then I urge that they be considered for land exchanges to acquire beautiful areas facing development threats. California’s remaining wildlands are diminishing at a rapid rate, and we need, at the very least, to keep what we have, not to sell them off to the highest bidder.**

**The Administration is proposing these land sales as stopgap funding for a scaled-back Secure Rural Schools program that would be terminated in five years. Rural counties throughout California, particularly in the northern part of the State, rely heavily on this money to fund local transportation projects and educational programs. The Secure Rural Schools program also allows local communities in rural areas to form Resource Advisory Committees to develop projects that are improving the facilities and environment of the federal lands located in their Counties. A stable funding source must be provided, but not at the expense of our wilderness.**

**Last year California received about \$69 million for this program. I have heard from a number of California’s rural counties supporting the reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools Bill, not the elimination of it. I am committed to finding ways to fund this vital program which is helping rural communities bridge some of their most important funding needs.”**