

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3353

To provide temporary financial relief for rural school districts adversely impacted by the current energy crisis, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 29 (legislative day, JULY 28), 2008

Mr. CASEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To provide temporary financial relief for rural school districts adversely impacted by the current energy crisis, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Rural Fuel for School
5 Act of 2008”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Many rural schools are in sparsely popu-
9 lated areas, leading to problems such as high trans-

1 portation costs and limited access to cultural and
2 educational resources.

3 (2) Rural schools have severe fiscal constraints
4 due to declining enrollment and a limited tax base
5 to generate revenue.

6 (3) In 2006, the National Center for Education
7 Statistics determined that there were approximately
8 7,900 rural school districts in the United States.

9 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are the fol-
10 lowing:

11 (1) To provide temporary financial relief for
12 rural local educational agencies adversely impacted
13 by the current energy crisis.

14 (2) To establish a temporary grant program to
15 provide eligible local educational agencies with
16 grants to help cover the cost of transporting elemen-
17 tary and secondary students.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—

21 The term “eligible local educational agency” means
22 a local educational agency that—

23 (A) is classified as fringe rural, distant
24 rural, or remote rural by the National Center
25 for Education Statistics; and

1 (B) meets 1 or more of the following con-
2 ditions:

3 (i) The agency has experienced an in-
4 crease in annual fuel costs of not less than
5 20 percent compared to the previous fiscal
6 year.

7 (ii) The agency has experienced an in-
8 crease in contract transportation costs of
9 not less than 20 percent compared to the
10 previous fiscal year.

11 (iii) The Secretary certifies that the
12 agency has experienced extreme hardship
13 in providing transportation to elementary
14 and secondary students due to increased
15 fuel prices.

16 (2) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term
17 “local educational agency” has the meaning given
18 the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Sec-
19 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

20 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of Education.

22 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall make grants
24 to eligible local educational agencies to enable the eligible

1 local educational agencies to continue providing transpor-
2 tation to elementary and secondary students.

3 (b) ANNOUNCEMENT.—The Secretary shall publish a
4 notice announcing a grant competition under this Act, and
5 solicit proposals for grants, not later than 90 days after
6 the date of enactment of this Act.

7 (c) AWARD BASIS.—The Secretary shall award
8 grants under this Act in such a manner as to assist as
9 many eligible local educational agencies as possible.

10 (d) LIMITATIONS.—

11 (1) FREQUENCY.—An eligible local educational
12 agency shall only receive a grant under this Act once
13 in a 3 year period.

14 (2) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—Each grant under
15 this Act shall be in an amount that is not less than
16 10 percent and not more than 50 percent of an eligi-
17 ble local educational agency's annual total transpor-
18 tation costs for the previous fiscal year.

19 **SEC. 5. APPLICATIONS.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible local educational agen-
21 cy that desires a grant under this Act shall submit to the
22 Secretary an application at such time, in such manner,
23 and accompanied by such information as the Secretary
24 may require.

1 (b) CONTENTS.—An application submitted under
 2 subsection (a) shall—

3 (1) describe the activities for which assistance
 4 under this section is sought; and

5 (2) provide such additional assurances as the
 6 Secretary determines to be necessary to ensure com-
 7 pliance with this section.

8 **SEC. 6. REPORTS.**

9 Not later than 1 year after the end of the grant pe-
 10 riod, each eligible local educational agency receiving a
 11 grant under this Act shall submit a report to the Secretary
 12 detailing the eligible local educational agency's perform-
 13 ance of the activities described in section 5(b)(1).

14 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
 16 this Act—

17 (1) \$5,000,000 for fiscal years 2009 through
 18 2013; and

19 (2) \$2,500,000 for fiscal year 2014.

20 **SEC. 8. SUNSET PROVISION.**

21 The authority to make grants under this Act shall
 22 expire on December 31, 2013.

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