March 18, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Ranking Member Mikulski,

As Members of Congress representing counties with federal public lands within their boundaries, we write to request that you work together to ensure the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program is fully funded. The Department of the Interior has estimated that $480 million dollars will be necessary to fully fund PILT in FY 2017.

PILT provides critical resources to nearly 1,900 counties across 49 states to offset lost property tax revenue due to the presence of tax-exempt federal lands within their jurisdictions. It supports the many critical services that counties provide on federal public lands. Without full funding for the PILT program in FY 2017, counties across the nation will be unable to provide essential services such as education, law enforcement, search and rescue, road maintenance and public health to their residents and millions of federal lands visitors.

Moving forward, we hope Congress can work together to enact a fiscally responsible, long-term solution to fully fund PILT and eliminate the ongoing funding uncertainty counties face. As counties across the country work to balance their own budgets, enacting full-funding for PILT is essential to provide certainty that the federal government will continue to uphold its long-standing commitment to public lands counties.

We look forward to working with you, leadership, and other relevant Committees to resolve this pressing issue facing our communities by fully funding PILT in FY 2017 and ensuring long-term predictable funding for this important program.

Sincerely,

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

Harry Reid  
United States Senator

John Barrasso, M.D.  
United States Senator
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Jim Risch
United States Senator

Al Franken
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator
Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Steve Daines
United States Senator

Jon Tester
United States Senator

John Hoeven
United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator