

September 9, 2014



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Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

On behalf of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), I urge you to work in the coming weeks to secure an additional year of funding for two vitally important public lands payment programs: the *Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act* (SRS) and the *Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes* (PILT) program. While counties understand the serious budget situation the country is facing and the difficult funding decisions that Congress will be considering, the pressing need in our rural communities for these funds is simply too great to delay any longer.

As you know, the *Helium Stewardship Act of 2013* (PL 113-40) extended SRS through fiscal year 2013, with final payments under the program distributed to counties earlier this year. It should be noted that 39 rural counties in California received a total of \$32.7 million in SRS funding. These funds are being used to maintain local roads and schools, operate search and rescue missions, and provide many other essential local services. However, unless the program is renewed in a timely manner, layoff notices for rural schoolteachers and road department personnel are expected.

The PILT program - extended through fiscal year 2014 as part of the *Agricultural Act of 2014* (PL 113-79) - provides payments to counties to help offset losses in tax revenues due to the presence of tax-exempt federal land in their jurisdictions. As a whole, California counties generally receive more PILT funding each year than any other state. In fiscal year 2014, all 58 of California's counties received a combined \$45.3 million in PILT payments, or more than 10 percent of the \$437 million available for the program nationwide. Without this important source of funding, counties could face huge budget shortfalls impacting public safety, education, infrastructure, and other local government responsibilities.

Again, CSAC urges you to secure an additional year of funding for both of these vitally important public lands programs. We also look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months to develop a sustainable, long-term funding solution for SRS and PILT.

Thank you for your continued support of California's counties. Should you have any questions or if you need any additional information, please contact Hasan Sarsour, CSAC Washington Representative, at 202-898-1444, or Karen Keene, CSAC Deputy Director of Federal Affairs at 916-327-7500 ext. 511.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Matt Cate'.

Matt Cate
CSAC Executive Director