

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 24, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to request that full funding of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) program be included in any end-of-year legislation likely to pass in the Senate and House. We greatly appreciate your attention to these programs in previous years and would welcome the opportunity to work with you to ensure that a solution be in place before the end of the 113th Congress for these payments to be funded and paid during at least Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15).

The PILT program provides critical resources to nearly 1,900 counties in 49 states and 3 U.S. territories. It was created in 1976 to help offset losses to local governments from the presence of non-taxable federal lands. Property taxes fund county governments allowing them to provide essential services such as law enforcement, public safety, infrastructure maintenance, education, and health services for local communities. A fully-funded PILT program helps to ensure that counties that house federal lands can continue to provide these essential services.

The SRS program reaches over 775 rural counties and 4,400 schools located near national forests throughout the country. SRS payments support public schools, public roads, forest health projects, and other county projects. Along with PILT, rural counties rely heavily on SRS to help provide essential services to residents.

Moving forward, we hope that we can work together to seek a long-term solution to provide a consistent and stable source of funding for the nation's counties containing federal lands. As we approach the end of the 113th Congress, however, we urge you to consider the economic hardship and uncertainty that these counties will face if the PILT program is not given consistent funding. In supporting the PILT and SRS programs, we have the opportunity to fulfill the federal government's obligation to local communities with large amounts of federal land. We look forward to working with you to resolve this pressing issue facing our communities in FY15 and in the coming years.

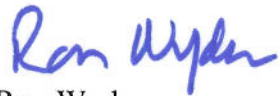


Tom Udall
United States Senator

Sincerely,



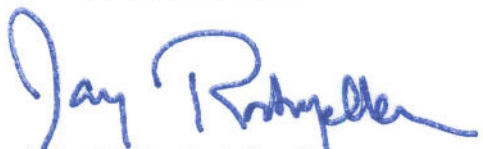
Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Carl Levin
United States Senator



John D. Rockefeller IV
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



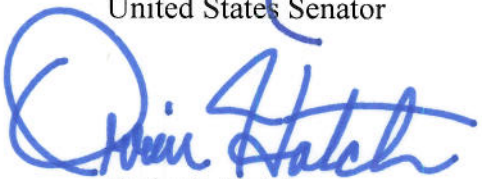
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



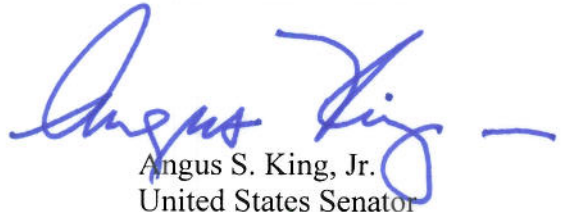
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



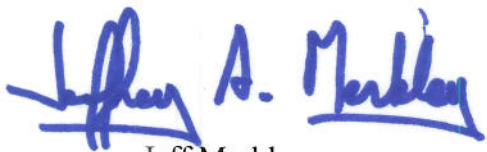
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



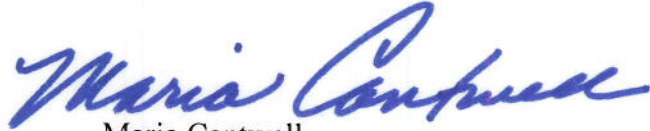
Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Dean Heller
United States Senator



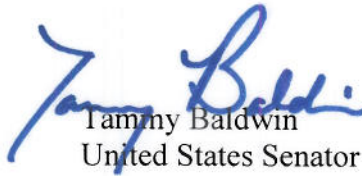
Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator



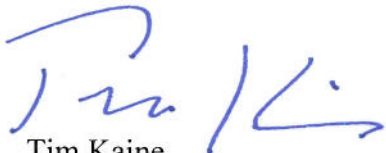
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



John E. Walsh
United States Senator



Deb Fischer
United States Senator



Mark L. Pryor
United States Senator



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Tim Johnson
United States Senator



Mark Udall
United States Senator



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator