Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 2014

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rogers and Chairwoman Mikulski:

As the House and Senate Appropriations Committees work to develop a final Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 spending measure, we urge your committee to fully support the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. Recent media reports have said that PILT funding is likely to be eliminated in the final bill. This would negatively harm rural communities and would be contrary to the recently adopted budget resolution that included a deficit neutral reserve fund placeholder for PILT.

Counties with federal land in their jurisdictions provide vital services on those lands, such as solid waste management, search and rescue and emergency medical services. Yet, these same counties are grossly disadvantaged in their ability to fund these services because of the high presence of federally owned lands. In some counties, 90% or more of the land is federally owned and is neither taxable nor productive. The PILT program helps offset the loss of these important revenues and fulfill the federal government's obligation to local communities with large amounts of federal land.

We urge you to consider the economic hardship that counties across the nation will face if the PILT program is not given consistent funding. We further urge you to consider offsets that are fair and equitable and not disproportionally burdensome to many of the same states and counties for whom PILT is critical. We appreciate your consideration of this important issue and we hope that we can work together to seek a long-term funding solution to provide a consistent and stable source of funding or until such a time when federal lands might be transferred to state and local ownership.

Sincerely,

Rob Bishop
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

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