

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
and Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment
and Related Agencies
2256 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Calvert and Ranking Members Lowey and McCollum:

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to prioritize resources and fully support the *Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)* program. For almost 40 years, PILT payments have provided compensation to local governments to offset the loss of tax revenues that result from the presence of federal lands within their jurisdictions. PILT payments are distributed to 49 different states and nearly 2,000 counties throughout the nation.

With the federal government nearly \$18 trillion in debt and already the largest single owner of land in the country, we must work together to find fiscally responsible and creative solutions for land management challenges, including PILT. As we work to find solutions to these challenges, it is critical that PILT continue to be funded annually.

As you know, sales taxes and local property taxes typically fund local governments and provide important revenues for essential services, including law enforcement, infrastructure and education. Counties are often required to provide these services on tax-exempt federal lands. The federal government owns significant portions of land in counties throughout the country. PILT funding helps offset the losses of these critical revenues and allows for the continuation of essential services.

In Fiscal Year 2014, the national average for PILT payments was 72 cents per acre. This figure pales in comparison to the amount of revenues that would be generated for states and local governments if economic development and value-based taxation were allowed to occur on these lands.

The federal government has an obligation to reimburse local governments for large quantities of federal lands found within their jurisdiction. Failure to provide PILT payments in FY2016 and beyond places an unsustainable burden on local taxpayers as well as local governments. We ask that you recognize the importance of the PILT program and include funding in the Fiscal Year 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

As always, we thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request, and for your continued leadership on your respective committees.

Sincerely,



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress