March 22, 2017

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

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
The Capitol, Room S-146A  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairman Leahy,

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.

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 fiscal year (FY) 2018, counties across the nation will be unable to provide essential services such as law enforcement, education, 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 to resolve this pressing issue facing our communities by fully funding PILT in FY 2018 and ensuring long-term predictable funding for this important program.

Sincerely,

Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator
James E. Risch  
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator

Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator