January ##, 2014

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

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Rogers, Vice Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Lowey:

As the House and Senate Appropriations Committees works to develop a final Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 spending measure, we respectfully request that your committee fully support the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. The PILT program provides critical funding to nearly 1,900 counties in 49 states and three U.S. territories. As you know, the recently adopted budget resolution included a deficit neutral reserve fund placeholder for PILT. With this bipartisan acknowledgment to fund the program, we respectfully request that the program be fully funded and appropriately offset in the upcoming appropriations bill.

PILT is currently authorized at $425 million for fiscal year 2014 to help offset losses to local governments from the presence of non-taxable federal lands through direct payments to counties and other local governments. Counties with federal land in their jurisdictions often provide vital services on those lands, such as solid waste management, search and rescue and emergency medical services. A fully funded PILT program helps to offset the loss of these important revenues and fulfill the federal governments' obligation to local communities with large amounts of federal land.

In July 2012, President Obama signed into law PL 112-141, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). Included in the legislation was mandatory funding for PILT. After implementation of the Budget Control Act (sequestration cuts), counties received roughly $400 million in FY 2013. Unless Congress acts, Counties will have received their last fully funded PILT disbursement in June of 2013.

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 understand the Appropriations Committee has some difficult funding decisions coming up and we appreciate your consideration of this important issue. Moving forward, I hope that we can work together to seek a long-term funding solution to provide a consistent and stable source of funding for the nation's PILT counties.

Respectfully,

[insert list of county officials and state and national county organizations]