Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2014

Hon. John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi,

As the 113th Congress comes to an end, we urge you to work in a bi-partisan, bi-cameral fashion to secure funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) programs for fiscal year 2015. Without full funding of these programs, counties throughout our districts and across the nation will be unable to provide our constituents with essential services such as education, law enforcement, and road maintenance. While it must be our ultimate goal to enact a long-term, sustainable solution to eliminate the ongoing uncertainty our counties face, an extension and full-funding of these programs is essential to address immediate needs.

PILT provides payments to local governments in 49 states and nearly 1,900 counties to offset foregone revenue due to tax-exempt federal lands within their jurisdictions. Current authorization for full PILT funding expired on September 30, 2014. Without congressional action, we risk severely crippling these counties' ability to operate.

Equally important is the funding that more than 700 forest counties and school districts receive through SRS. These payments honor the over 100 year old contract between the federal government and counties housing the 193 million acres of federal forest land. Due to extremely low productivity on our forests over the past two decades, these funds are more critical to counties' well-being than ever. SRS expired last year and must be authorized to avoid economic catastrophe in rural and timber communities across the nation.

PILT and SRS allow the federal government to meet its long-standing obligations to counties with federal land. It is imperative that we fulfill this duty. We thank you for your consideration of this request and stand ready to work with you going forward.

Sincerely,

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

Joe Garcia
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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