

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 22, 2010

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

As you know, many rural counties in the West are dependent on the funding that comes from the Department of the Interior due to the loss of potential tax revenues on federal lands, known as Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT). Nearly \$381 million was distributed to counties across the nation in FY2009. This money is critical to keeping county government functioning. Many of these counties have obligations that must be met by June 30 and these obligations cannot be modified.

That's why we are concerned by your department's announcement that it will be releasing PILT funds later than anticipated. County governments, already facing a dismal economic situation, cannot wait an extra month for these funds, or simply suspend their operations for a month. They need these funds now, simply to keep their doors open. Additionally, we encourage your department to provide appropriate outreach to communities depending on these funds.

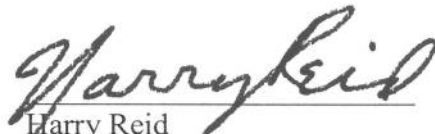
We urge you to issue these funds at their previously scheduled release date. While we understand that the PILT formula is complicated, it is critical for rural governments that the Department of Interior expedites the release of these funds as quickly as possible. If the Department can only estimate payments at this time because of difficulties in determining the final payment amount, we urge you to consider providing estimated payments that can be adjusted later so that our rural counties are not left stranded while this is resolved. At a minimum, the Department should determine if there is any short term solution to this issue so that a payment can go out to counties this month.

Thank you for your understanding of the importance of this request. We look forward to your prompt attention to this matter.

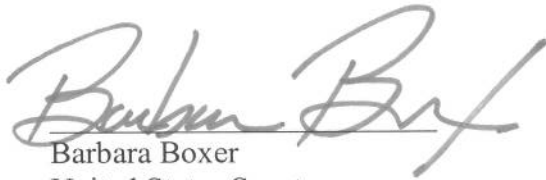
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Harry Reid
United States Senator



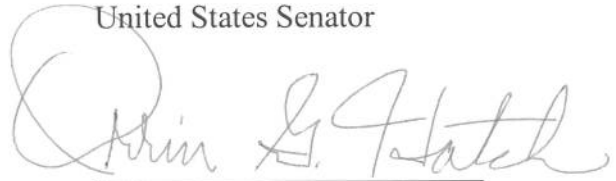
Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



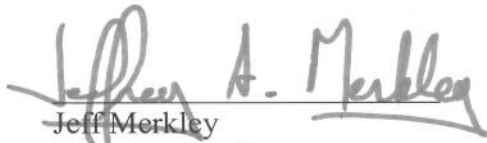
Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senator



Max Baucus
United States Senator




Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator



Mark Begich
United States Senator



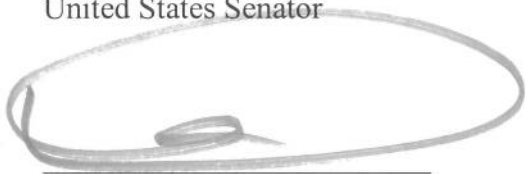
John Barrasso
United States Senator



Robert F. Bennett
United States Senator



Rob Bishop
United States Representative



David Wu
United States Representative



Greg Walden
United States Representative



Earl Blumenauer
United States Representative



Jason Chaffetz
United States Representative



Peter A. DeFazio
United States Representative



Tom McClintock
United States Representative



Kurt Schrader
United States Representative



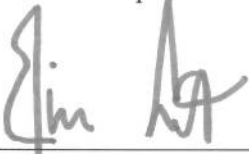
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
United States Representative



Jim Matheson
United States Representative



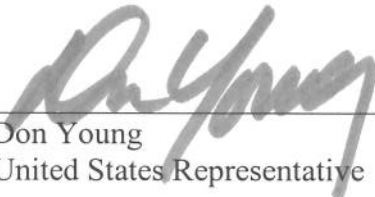
Tom Cole
United States Representative



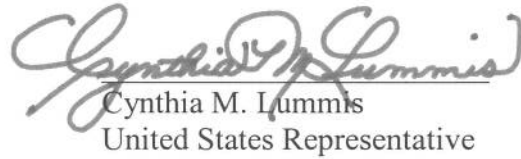
Jim Costa
United States Representative



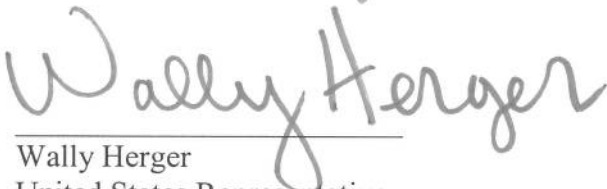
Dean Heller
United States Representative



Don Young
United States Representative



Cynthia M. Lummis
United States Representative



Wally Herger
United States Representative



Denny Rehberg
United States Representative



Devin Nunes
United States Representative



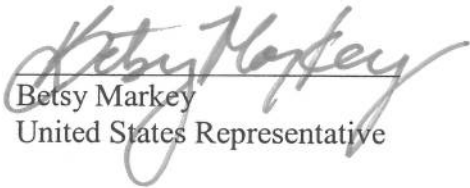
Michael K. Simpson
United States Representative



Jon Tester
United States Senator



John Ensign
United States Senator



Betsy Markey
United States Representative



Doc Hastings
United States Representative