

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 4, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy:

We write to share our steadfast support for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. Specifically, we urge you to reauthorize SRS and maintain robust PILT funding as part of the appropriations process.

SRS and PILT serve as a lifeline to rural America's local governments and now, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the budgets of these rural counties have taken a hit. These two programs fund roads, schools, law enforcement, and essential county services, such as public health programs. With additional demands on their resources as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, rural communities and counties are stretched thinner than ever.

Despite being small, rural, and generally relatively remote, county governments that rely on SRS and PILT are responding to the same national health crisis facing larger cities and urban areas. Extending and funding these two programs has wide, bipartisan support, which was on display as recently as 2019, when the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a legislative hearing on PILT and SRS.

As Congress works to establish a permanent solution for counties, diversify rural economies, improve forest management and forest health, strengthen historic forest revenue sharing with local governments, and ensure that public lands provide a range of values such as clean water, jobs, grazing opportunities, and wood fiber for local economies, a short-term reauthorization is critical for counties across the country.

In order to assist these rural counties' response to the current public health crisis, as well as to invest in infrastructure, schools, and law enforcement, Congress must include a reauthorization of SRS, including the programmatic amendments to S. 430 passed on a broad bipartisan basis in

the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Further, we urge you to maintain robust funding for PILT as you continue funding negotiations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Sincerely,



Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator

/s/ James E. Risch
James E. Risch
U.S. Senator

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator

/s/ Lisa Murkowski
Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator

/s/ Joe Manchin III
Joe Manchin III
U.S. Senator

/s/ Dan Sullivan
Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator

/s/ Kevin Cramer
Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator

/s/ Jon Tester
Jon Tester
U.S. Senator

/s/ Roger F. Wicker
Roger F. Wicker
U.S. Senator

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto
Catherine Cortez Masto
U.S. Senator

/s/ Steve Daines
Steve Daines
U.S. Senator

/s/ Martin Heinrich
Martin Heinrich
U.S. Senator

/s/ Mitt Romney
Mitt Romney
U.S. Senator

/s/ Tina Smith
Tina Smith
U.S. Senator

/s/ Michael S. Lee
Michael S. Lee
U.S. Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
Jacky Rosen
U.S. Senator

/s/ John Boozman
John Boozman
U.S. Senator

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono
Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. Senator

/s/ Patty Murray
Patty Murray
U.S. Senator

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator

/s/ Maria Cantwell
Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator

/s/ Bernard Sanders
Bernard Sanders
U.S. Senator

/s/ Mark Kelly
Mark Kelly
U.S. Senator

/s/ Kyrsten Sinema
Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator

/s/ Jeanne Shaheen
Jeanne Shaheen
U.S. Senator