

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
U.S. Capitol, S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

Following up on the State, County and Locality Stabilization Fund passed as part of the CARES Act in late March 2020, we believe there is an opportunity to further stabilize local government funding in rural counties throughout America. We respectfully request a long-term solution for the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) and Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) programs at the next possible opportunity.

The stop and start authorizations and payments under SRS and PILT have wreaked havoc on rural America for decades, and now, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the budgets of these rural counties are decimated. These two programs fund roads, schools, law enforcement, and essential county services, such as public health programs. With inadequate funding and now additional demands on their resources, rural communities and counties are at the breaking point.

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 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, and received testimony on legislation that would permanently extend SRS and build on the historic link between timber receipts and county payments.

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 consider long-term solutions for PILT and SRS as soon as possible to ensure viability for these programs for generations to come.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

  
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Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

/S/ Michael F. Bennet

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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

/S/ Tom Udall

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Tom Udall  
United States Senator

/S/ Kyrsten Sinema

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Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator

/S/ Joe Manchin III

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Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator



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Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



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Jon Tester  
United States Senator



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James E. Risch  
United States Senator



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Steve Daines  
United States Senator

/S/ Martha McSally

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Martha McSally  
United States Senator



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Cory Gardner  
United States Senator



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Josh Hawley  
United States Senator

/S/ John Boozman

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John Boozman  
United States Senator



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Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



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Tina Smith  
United States Senator

/S/ Kamala D. Harris

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Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



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Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



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Tim Scott  
United States Senator

/S/ Dan Sullivan

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Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



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Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

/S/ Amy Klobuchar

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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



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Mitt Romney  
United States Senator



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

/S/ Martin Heinrich

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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator