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## **PILT Payments, Access to Federal Lands Vital to Rural Communities**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands today held an [oversight hearing](#) on “*Payments in Lieu of Taxes*” (PILT). Witnesses at the hearing underscored the importance of the program to rural communities with federally owned land, especially in the West, and the impact federal land management decisions have on surrounding communities.

With PILT slated to expire at the end of FY 2012, House Republicans will be evaluating the reauthorization of the program, the impacts of restrictive land management designations and the Obama Administration’s “wilderness agenda” on surrounding communities.

*“PILT has become an essential lifeline for many rural counties. Since more than half of all the land in the West is owned and managed by the federal government, PILT has a significant impact on the rural economies of Western States. However, PILT is not an equalizer. While PILT is a necessary source of funds for rural, primarily western counties, it often does not adequately reflect the economic opportunities available through active management and use of federal public lands,”* **said Subcommittee Chairman Rob Bishop (UT-01)** *“With the expiration of full funding for PILT looming in fiscal year 2012, the interests and livelihoods of all residents and stakeholders should be considered and protected when making land use decisions ... It is imperative that we begin to manage our federal lands and natural resources for a maximum return on conservation, economic and public benefit. Improved management of our federal lands and resources will create much-needed jobs, amplify conservation efforts and make America more self-reliant. This approach will help to keep PILT-reliant counties productive and viable.”*

*““PILT is an essential program that compensates rural counties for lost revenue from tax-exempt federal lands within their boundaries. It helps provide funding for services that are vital to community safety, education, transportation and local economies. House Republicans are committed to finding a way to renew and continue full funding of the program,”* **said Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).**

PILT, administered by the Department of the Interior (DOI), was established in 1976 to compensate local governments for lost property tax revenues on non-taxable federally owned land. County budgets are drafted with the expectation that DOI will distribute PILT funds on time, directly to local governments to help pay for vital programs such as road construction, schools, local search and rescue operations, law enforcement and emergency services. DOI has distributed more than \$5.5 billion in PILT payments since the payments began in 1977.

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