November 12, 2014

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Pelosi, Minority Leader McConnell:

We respectfully request your active support for full funding of the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) programs for Fiscal Year 2015. The federal government must fulfill its longstanding obligation to fund these programs for rural counties with tax exempt federal lands and for timber-dependent counties that rely on this funding to provide necessary government services to their citizens.

The PILT program was enacted in 1976 to provide direct payments to nearly 1,900 counties in 49 states and three U.S. territories to help compensate them for the presence of non-taxable federal lands in their jurisdictions.

Congress passed SRS in 2000 to compensate more than 700 forest counties and school districts for lost timber harvesting revenue due to changes in federal forest management policy. These payments help fund critical education, infrastructure, and various basic community needs in these jurisdictions formed around federal forests.

Authorizations for both PILT and SRS have expired. State and local governments cannot provide needed educational and public safety services without these payments. As the end of the 113th Congress approaches, we urge you to work together to find a permanent funding solution for these programs and end the annual authorization and appropriations uncertainty that unnecessarily interferes with planning and budgeting in these small communities.
Honorable John Boehner  
Honorable Harry Reid  
Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Honorable Mitch McConnell  
November 12, 2014  
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We thank you for your support of these two programs that are so important to Western states.

Respectfully,

[Signatures]

Brian Sandoval  
Governor, State of Nevada  
Chairman, WGA

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.  
Governor, State of Oregon  
Vice Chairman, WGA

cc: Honorable Barbara Mikulski, United States Senate  
Honorable Richard Shelby, United States Senate  
Honorable Jack Reed, United States Senate  
Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate  
Honorable Ron Wyden, United States Senate  
Honorable Orrin Hatch, United States Senate  
Honorable Harold Rogers, House of Representatives  
Honorable Nita Lowey, House of Representatives  
Honorable Ken Calvert, House of Representatives  
Honorable James Moran, House of Representatives  
Honorable Dave Camp, House of Representatives  
Honorable Sander Levin, House of Representatives