



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2005

Mark Walsh
Western Counties Alliance
P.O. Box 57035
Murray, UT 84157

Dear Mark:

Let me give you a quick update on our efforts to fully fund PILT in FY 2006.

The President in his proposed budget requested \$27 million less than the current FY 2005 funding level for PILT, reflecting a lack of recognition or appreciation within the administration for the contribution made by rural counties to both the users of public lands and the federal land management agencies.

In addition to making the case that the federal government has a moral and legal responsibility to fund PILT, we must also make it a high priority to fully educate key Executive Branch policymakers about the support and services provided by rural counties, which desperately need full PILT funding because they have nowhere else to turn to pay for services rendered on public lands.

The good news on PILT funding is that everyone I have spoken to in Congress, including key members on the Appropriations Committee, takes seriously the need to increase PILT funding. I hope that funding for PILT for FY 2006 will not be lower than the current level. However, given the current budget climate, it will take extraordinary effort on the part of all of us who are committed to full funding to make it happen.

That is why your efforts to organize these public lands counties through the Western Counties Alliance in support of full funding for PILT is so critical. I am sure that we cannot succeed without the pressure and support of public lands counties, especially those in the West.

I look forward to working with you to fully fund PILT and hope you will let me know what I can do to help you in your organizing efforts.

Sincerely,

Chris Cannon
Member of Congress