Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

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 in the next COVID-19 legislative package, and that such funding not be deducted from direct aid to state and local governments that may be included in the next legislative package.

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 other 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 as proven by the multiple extensions over the years. Now more than ever, these counties need the certainty that long term authorizations can provide to ensure viability for these programs for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

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Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress

Don Young
Member of Congress

Scott Tipton
Member of Congress

Mike Simpson
Member of Congress

Glenn "G.T." Thompson
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