NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Brian Namey, bnamey@naco.org, 202.942.4220

Counties urge immediate congressional action on Payment in Lieu of Taxes program

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Counties (NACo) today redoubled its efforts to urge Congress to approve immediate (FY15) funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes, or PILT, program, which enables counties to provide vital services to residents and visitors to America’s public lands.

“In the next few weeks, Congress must deal with many major issues,” said NACo Executive Director Matthew D. Chase. “For the 62 percent of America’s counties with federal public lands, the most pressing priority is full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program. Without swift congressional action, local property owners and their counties could face devastating budget shortfalls or dramatic tax increases to support mandated county services.”

Despite not being able to collect property taxes on federal lands, county governments still provide essential services to their residents and visitors to public lands, including solid waste disposal, law enforcement, road and bridge upkeep and emergency medical services. Without PILT funding, counties and property owners would be burdened with funding vital public services related to federal public lands beyond the means of the local tax base.

Sixty-two percent of the nation’s counties have federal lands within their boundaries. In some counties, 80–90 percent of the land is federally owned. Counties provide significant support for national parks and forests, wildlife refuges, recreation areas and other land that covers roughly 640 million acres, or nearly 28 percent of the U.S. More than 280 million people visit America’s national parks and other federal public lands each year.

“Counties deliver a vast network of services to support federal public lands,” said Chase. “From trash collection to road maintenance, from search-and-rescue operations to fire protection, county services allow millions to enjoy federal public lands each year.”

This year, the PILT program provided $437 million to approximately 1,900 counties and other local governments to offset forgone tax revenues due to the presence of substantial acreage of federal land in their jurisdictions.

In September, NACo held a briefing with a bipartisan group of lawmakers on Capitol Hill and launched an online action center with national and county-specific information about the PILT program. The online hub features detailed profiles for the 1,126 individual counties that receive...
more than $10,000 of PILT funding, key facts and data points and tips for spreading the word via social media.

For more information, visit http://www.naco.org/PILT.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America’s 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. More information at: www.naco.org.