

# PILT SUPPORTS CRITICAL COUNTY SERVICES ACROSS THE NATION.



URGE CONGRESS TO FULLY FUND PILT FOR FY 2022 AND BEYOND!

**GET INVOLVED IN PILT ADVOCACY!** 

### **ABOUT NACo**

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

### MISSION

Through NACo, county officials:

- Advocate with a collective voice on national policy
- Exchange ideas and build new leadership skills
- Pursue transformational, cost-effective solutions
- Enrich the public's understanding of county government, and
- Exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

## VISION

Healthy, vibrant and safe counties across the United States.

Stronger Counties. Stronger America.



# 2021 VIRTUAL PILT FLY-IN and GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

PILT is a critical program that reimburses counties for reduced property tax revenue due to the presence of non-taxable federal land within their jurisdictions. PILT supports essential county services such as education, solid waste disposal, law enforcement, fire-fighting, search and rescue, public health and health care. In the first week of November, county officials from across the nation will meet virtually with members of Congress to advocate in support of the Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program.

Included in this toolkit are resources to assist you in your own grassroots advocacy efforts in support of the PILT program. NACo encourages all county officials to support PILT advocacy efforts by contacting their Senators and Members of Congress, engaging with local news media and utilizing social media to advocate for full mandatory funding of the PILT program for Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond.



# CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THIS PRESENTATION

# **ACTION ITEMS!**



#### WRITE YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

A sample letter to Congress is included in this toolkit



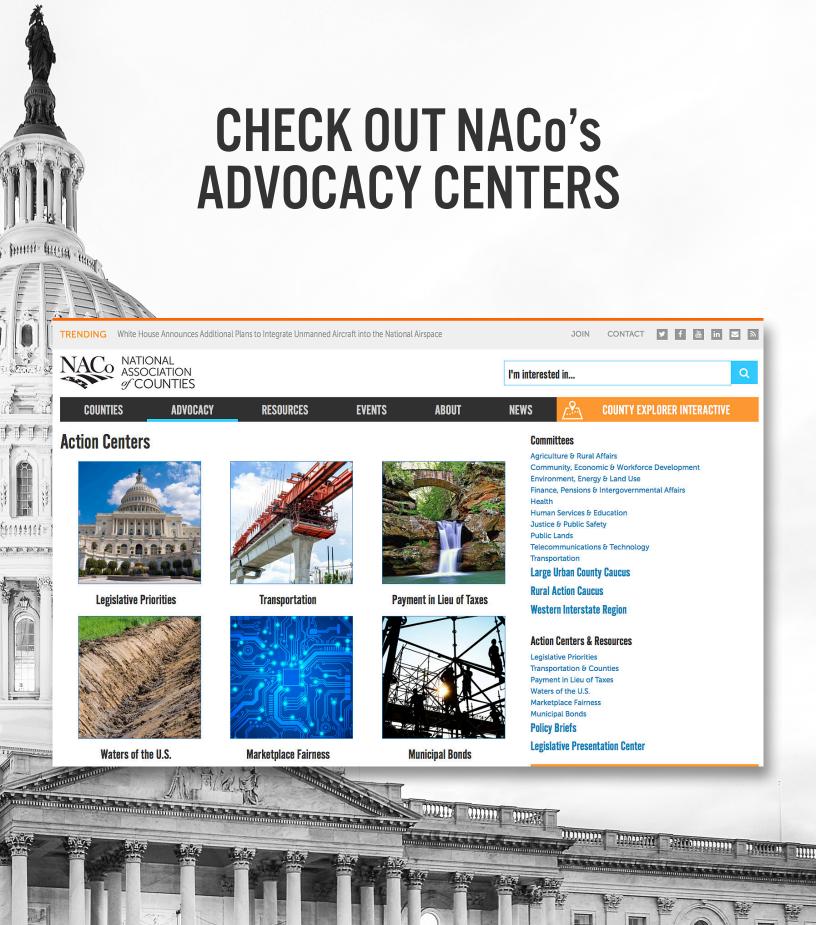
#### PUBLISH AN OP-ED OR LETTER TO THE EDITOR IN YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

This toolkit includes a sample Op-Ed and Letter to the Editor along with talking points on the importance of PILT to help you write your own.



#### ENGAGE YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Remember to tag your members of Congress in your tweets and Facebook posts. Sample tweets and posts for social media are provided in this toolkit.





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ASSOCIATION NACO



## **2021 PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES**

## U.S. COUNTIES AND PILT

PILT RECEIVED, FY 2021:

PERCENT OF PILT ENTITLEMENT LAND:

PILT ENTITLEMENT ACRES:

PILT AMOUNT PER ENTITLEMENT ACRE:

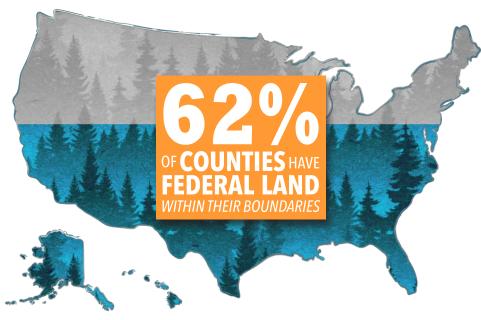
\$529,285,854

**61.6**%

612,705,751

\$2.87

## FEDERAL LANDS, LOCAL COMMUNITIES -



- 61.6% of counties have federal land within their boundaries. Even though they are not able to collect property taxes on federal land, county governments must still provide essential services for their residents and those who visit these public lands each year. Such services include road and bridge maintenance, law enforcement, search and rescue, emergency medical, fire protection, solid waste disposal and environmental compliance.
- Our ask: Counties urge Congress to provide full funding for PILT in FY 2022 and to support a sustainable long-term approach to financing essential local services in America's public lands counties.

NOTES: NACo analysis of U.S. Department of the Interior data. PILT received, FY 2021 represents the total PILT appropriations for fiscal year 2020.

The total number of PILT entitlement acres reflects the number of acres eligible for PILT payments.

#### PILT FUNDING CRITICAL FOR SERVICES INCLUDING:



ROAD AND BRIDGE MAINTENANCE



LAW ENFORCEMENT



SEARCH AND RESCUE



EMERGENCY MEDICAL



FIRE PROTECTION



SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE



# BACKGROUND and TALKING POINTS

Created in 1976, the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program was established by Congress to offset reductions in local property tax revenues due to the presence of non-taxable federal land within their jurisdictions. The PILT program helps defray the costs incurred by counties for services provided to federal employees and their families, the public and to the users of federal public lands. These include education, solid waste disposal, law enforcement, search and rescue, health care, environmental compliance, fire-fighting, parks and recreation and other important community services.

Historically, annual PILT funding levels remained static for many years. For nearly two decades, counties watched the value of their PILT receipts drop due to inflation. In 1995, NACo was successful in securing a legislative fix for the PILT formula, (P.L. 103-397), which adjusts annual authorization levels to account for inflation.

In FY 2021, Congress provided record funding for PILT at \$529.3 million. The FY 2020 Omnibus Appropriations bill, and FY 2019 Appropriations package provided full funding for PILT at \$514.7 million for FY 2020 and FY 2019. The FY 2018 Omnibus Appropriations package, signed by the president on March 23, 2018, funded PILT at \$552.8 million for the remainder of FY 2018. For FY 2017, PILT was fully funded at \$465 million through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017. In FY 2016, Congress appropriated full funding for PILT of \$452 million through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (P.L. 114-113). In FY 2014, in FY 2014, PILT was fully funded through the Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79) at \$425 million as a mandatory program. Full mandatory funding for FY 2013 was achieved through the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) (P.L. 112-141), which provided \$399 million in PILT funding. Previously, the enactment of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (P.L. 110-343) provided full mandatory funding for PILT from FY 2008 through FY 2012. From 1995 to 2007, PILT was a discretionary program and as a result was underfunded year after year.

Without mandatory full funding, PILT will remain a discretionary program subject to the annual appropriations process and could fall back to pre-2008 funding levels, devastating local government service delivery in areas with significant federal land ownership.

Urge your members of Congress to support mandatory full funding of the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program for FY 2022 and beyond. Unless Congress acts, counties will receive their last fully funded PILT disbursement in 2021.



For additional support on your advocacy efforts, please contact Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Associate Legislative Director for Public Lands, at <a href="mailto:jshuffield@naco.org">jshuffield@naco.org</a> or 202.942.4207.



**CLICK HERE TO VIEW NACo's PILT POLICY BRIEF** 



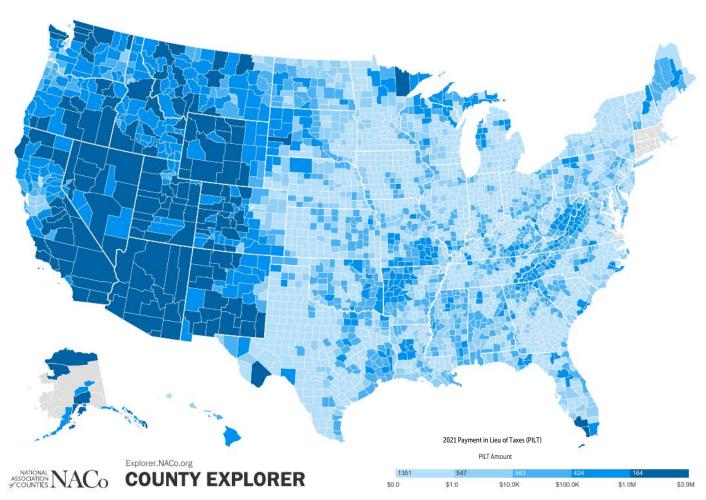
## **GIVE A TOUR!**

While members of Congress are in their states and districts during congressional recesses, county officials should invite their federal lawmakers and their staff to tour and see firsthand the many services counties provide on federal lands and to millions of federal land visitors each year. These tours give legislators and their staffs an opportunity to see the impacts the presence of federal lands has on counties and the many services counties provide on federal lands every day. These events are also good opportunities to earn media coverage around your advocacy. County officials should reach out to local media to make the most of these events.

## WRITE A LETTER!

Send a letter written on county letterhead, either through the U.S. Postal Service or via email, which explains why it's critical to your county that Congress fully fund PILT for FY 2022 and beyond. Download a draft letter to Congress here. Information on office locations and contact numbers can be found on members' websites. Links to U.S. House of Representatives websites can be found here and links to U.S. Senate websites can be found here.

## PILT COUNTIES ACROSS THE U.S.





## GO SOCIAL!

Tell Congress why PILT must be fully funded for FY 2022 and beyond. Take pictures and share stories of your county's first responders, health care workers and municipal services employees providing essential services on federal public lands and urge Congress to fully fund #PILT. Most Senators and Representatives are on Twitter and monitor their Twitter feeds regularly. The easiest way to find your members of Congress is to utilize the search function on Twitter or by visiting your members' website. In addition to reaching out to your members of Congress on Twitter, consider targeting House and Senate leadership. You can keep NACo in the loop on your social media advocacy by being sure to include both @NACoTweets and #PILT in your tweets.

#### SAMPLE TWEETS:

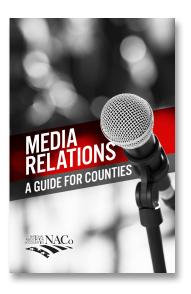
- L 1,900 #counties in 49 states & receive PILT funding, 28% land owned by Feds; not taxable by locals! www.naco.org/PILT
- Usual you miss law enforcement, road & bridge maintenance, search & rescue, waste disposal? Fund PILT! www.naco.org/PILT
- L The 640m acres of Fed-owned land covering 62% of US #counties is non-taxable: #PILT is key for local service delivery www.naco.org/PILT
- L #Counties rely on #PILT to make up for lost revenue on non-taxable Fed-owned lands and maintain services to community www.naco.org/PILT
- #PILT supports critical services #counties provide to +500m annual public lands visitors, urge full mandatory funding www.naco.org/PILT
- L Congress needs to pass full mandatory #PILT funding for FY 2022 & beyond; supports many critical #county services www.naco.org/PILT
- Without #PILT, many #counties w/Fed-owned land can't provide critical svcs like education, firefighting, health care <a href="www.naco.org/PILT">www.naco.org/PILT</a>
- For additional support on your advocacy efforts, please contact Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Associate Legislative Director for Public Lands, at <a href="mailto:jshuffield@naco.org">jshuffield@naco.org</a> or 202.942.4207.
- For additional support on your media relations efforts, please contact Paul Guequierre, NACo Communications Director, at <a href="mailto:pguequirre@naco.org">pguequirre@naco.org</a> or 202.942.4271.



## ENGAGE THE MEDIA!

Work with local media outlets to draw attention to the importance of the PILT program for counties. Inform your community about Congressional tours and other events through press releases and advisories. NACo's <u>Media Relations Guide for Counties</u> is available to assist county officials with local media outreach.

Write and submit op-ed columns or guest commentaries to local newspapers outlining the importance of the PILT program to your county and urging Congress to take action. Below are issue-specific message points to consider and general guidance on writing op-ed pieces. Remember, your ability to craft and tailor the message to fit your community is very important to placing an op-ed. County-specific examples and other local information will significantly enhance the points below.



#### **OP-ED GUIDANCE**

An opinion column written in your own words for publication in your local newspaper can be a very effective communications tool. Less rigid than a news release, an opinion column – also known as an "oped" because it is often placed opposite of the editorial page in a newspaper – can frame issues and messages precisely the way you want. Here are some points on writing a compelling op-ed.

- An effective op-ed will make a clear and effective argument supported by facts and examples. It will be informative, focused, persuasive and interesting.
- Columns should clearly communicate why the issue is important and specifically how it affects readers.
- Op-eds are commonly written in a conversational style less formal than a news release or fact sheet.
- Connecting your position to a specific or timely issue of local importance will make it more likely that a newspaper will publish your piece.
- Typically, op-eds are 500-750 words. Newspapers often publish specific requirements and instructions for submission on their websites.
- In many cases, a newspaper will only publish your piece if it does not or will not appear in another newspaper.

#### OP-FD FORMAT AND MESSAGE POINTS

The opening sentence or paragraph should grab readers' attention and spark their interest to read more. Consider starting the column with a local reference or recent news item.

#### **EXAMPLE**.

 One afternoon this past July in Theodore Roosevelt National Park in Billings and McKenzie counties, N.D., the temperature was 90 degrees, the humidity was 88 percent, and there was no wind. A 21-year-old man and two others, a 23-year-old woman and a 22-year-old man, were lost and dehydrated. County first responders were mobilizing.



For additional support on your media relations efforts, please contact Paul Guequierre, NACo Communications Director at <u>pguequierre@naco.org</u> or 202.942.4271.



#### TALKING POINTS

#### Full funding of PILT is critical for counties across the United States.

- 61.6 percent of counties have non-taxable federal public lands within their jurisdictions.
- The Federal government owns roughly 640 million acres of land across the United States.
- Federally owned land is exempt from property taxes. Counties rely on PILT to make up for these reduced property tax revenues.
- [Include local information and statistics describing how your county uses its PILT funds.]

#### Counties must provide essential services to their residents and public lands visitors.

- PILT helps support the many critical services that counties provide to over 500 million public lands visitors annually
- Counties maintain the roads that allow visitors access to federal lands, deliver law enforcement and search and rescue services, fight fires, and provide many other critical services on public lands.
- [Give specific examples of the services your county provides on federal public lands and for their visitors.]

## SAMPLE OP-ED

#### [TITLE]

The recent National Park Service centennial reminds us of the central role these iconic places play in our national identity. And as the summer comes to an end, hundreds of millions of visitors will have "found their park" or recreated on the other federal public lands that together make up nearly one-third of the United States.

Yet, preserving nature's majesty also has costs for surrounding communities.

Counties see their populations skyrocket with visitors at national parks. Tuolumne, Mariposa and Madera Counties in California, each home to a portion of Yosemite National Park, have a total combined population of 224,000 but receive about 4 million visitors annually.

Certainly, increased tourism is good for local economies, but counties need additional resources to meet demands for critical services by public lands visitors.

These services include everything from firefighting to search and rescue to roads maintenance and trash collection.

Counties alone cannot do it all. That's where the federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, or PILT, comes into play.

For over 40 years, the PILT program has provided funding to counties and other local governments to offset forgone tax revenues on federal land within their boundaries. Sixty-two percent of the nation's counties have federal public lands; many rural counties have more than 90 percent of their land area taken up by federal public land. Local governments cannot tax the property values or products derived from these lands, yet counties and their local taxpayers still pay for services provided in support of federal lands.

## TAKE ACTION!

The federal government generates about \$14 billion annually from commercial activities on federal land such as timber harvesting, oil and gas leasing and livestock grazing. The PILT program uses a small portion of this revenue to help local governments continue to provide essential services.

For 2021, Congress authorized discretionary funding of \$529.3 million for PILT. Without mandatory full funding, PILT will remain a discretionary program — subject to the annual appropriations process — and could fall back to pre-2008 funding levels when counties received 65 percent or less of necessary funding for PILT, dealing a major blow to local services in areas with federal land ownership.

[INSERT COUNTY-SPECIFIC INFO – FOR EXAMPLE: My home county, [COUNTY], is a rural county with substantial acreage of public lands, nearly XX percent. This year, we received \$XX to help fund road maintenance, public health, environmental compliance, law enforcement and other general government services. The payments are critical, representing roughly XX percent of our general fund budget and allowing us to provide a safe environment for our visitors.]

Without congressional action guaranteeing mandatory full funding for PILT for Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond, communities across the country could face devastating budget shortfalls affecting public safety, education, infrastructure and other local government functions that all Americans rely on.

This week, county officials from across the nation will go to Capitol Hill to advocate for PILT. Many more county officials are engaging in grassroots advocacy efforts in their home counties in support of this critical program.

The National Association of Counties is urging members of Congress to support a full investment in the PILT program in FY 2022 and permanent funding for the future.

For the millions of people who enjoy America's immense public lands, the case is clear. Without PILT, providing crucial services in order to accommodate millions of visitors to public lands each year would not be possible.



For additional support on your media relations efforts, please contact Paul Guequierre, NACo Communications Director at <a href="mailto:pguequierre@naco.org">pguequierre@naco.org</a> or 202.942.4271.

#### CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE OP-ED



# GUIDANCE ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If your local paper publishes an opinion column or news article on Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, federal lands, or the federal budget, provide the county perspective by writing a letter to the editor responding to the piece—or one of its points. Letters to the editor are a good way to spread the message in roughly 150-200 words, depending on the paper.

#### SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### [TITLE]

Dear Editor:

[Insert local news hook for PILT – For example: The article about the recent influx of visitors to our area reminds us of an important federal programs that needs our attention.]

Increased tourism is good for our economy, but we need additional resources to meet increased demands for county services that outpace what our local property tax base can support. That's why we have the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, or PILT.

Over 40 years, PILT has provided funding to counties and other local governments to offset forgone tax revenues on federal land within their boundaries.

Here in *COUNTY, XX* percent of the land is owned by the federal government. This year from the PILT program, we received \$XX to help pay for county services like infrastructure maintenance, solid waste disposal, law enforcement, firefighting, search and rescue and emergency medical response.

Our county and the National Association of Counties is urging lawmakers in Washington, D.C. to support mandatory full funding for PILT to ensure that we have the resources we need to continue delivering essential services in our communities.

Sincerely,

[Name of Local Elected Official]

[County, State]



For additional support on your media relations efforts, please contact Paul Guequierre, NACo Communications Director at <a href="mailto:pguequierre@naco.org">pguequierre@naco.org</a> or 202.942.4271.



## TELL NACo!

Please be sure to let NACo know about your advocacy efforts. Send copies of your letters to Congress, pictures from events and media coverage to Jonathan Shuffield, NACo's Associate Legislative Director for Public Lands, at jshuffield@naco.org or 202.942.4207.

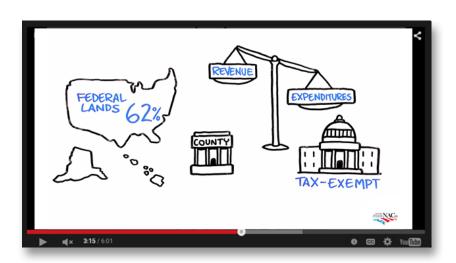
## ADDITIONAL NACO RESOURCES

NACo has additional resources available on its website to assist you in your advocacy efforts.

- Visit NACo's online PILT Action Hub at <a href="www.naco.org/PILT">www.naco.org/PILT</a> to watch our video "Why Federal Public Lands Matter to Counties," view legislative fact sheets on PILT, and read NACo's policy on the PILT program.
- View individual county PILT profiles on our County Explorer tool at explorer.naco.org/.
- To view NACo's PILT presentation, click here
- To view NACo's Policy Brief, click here
- To view NACo's PILT advocacy video, click here

## RELEVANT COMMITTEES (FIND YOUR MEMBER):

- Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
- House Natural Resources Committee
- Senate Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
- House Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee
- For additional support on your advocacy efforts, please contact Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Associate Legislative Director for Public Lands, at <a href="mailto:jshuffield@naco.org">jshuffield@naco.org</a> or 202.942.4207.
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CHECK OUT NACo's VIDEO
ON PILT AND WHY IT
MATTERS TO COUNTIES



# SAMPLE LETTER TO CONGRESS

#### [Date]

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]

United States [Senate/House of Representatives]

[Address Line 1]

[Address Line 2]

Dear [Senator/Congressman Last Name],

On behalf of the [Number] residents of *[Name]* County, I respectfully request your urgent help and support in developing a bi-partisan, bi-cameral funding solution for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. Unless Congress acts before current PILT funding expires, our county will face a budget shortfall that will impact our ability to provide essential services to residents and visitors.

[Name] County is just one of nearly 1,900 counties in 49 states and three U.S. territories that receive PILT funding. The federal government owns approximately 28 percent of all land in the U.S., and these lands are not taxable by local governments. PILT helps to offset reduced tax revenues and help communities provide essential services to federal employees and their families, the public and users of public lands. In my county, PILT funds are used to [describe expenditures for county services using PILT funds such as road and bridge maintenance, law enforcement, search and rescue, solid waste disposal and environmental compliance].

Without the certainty of full funding for the PILT program, counties throughout the nation will be unable to provide their residents with essential services such as education, law enforcement, search and rescue, road maintenance and public health. While it must be Congress' ultimate goal to enact a long-term, sustainable solution to eliminate the ongoing uncertainty counties face, full-funding in FY 2022 for the PILT program is essential to provide America's counties with the certainty they need to plan their own budgets.

Thank you for your continued service to the people of [Name] County. County elected officials stand ready to work with you to develop a full funding solution for PILT for FY 2022 and beyond.

Sincerely,

[Name of Local Elected Official]

[County, State]

CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THIS LETTER

