

Thursday, June 14, 2012

Santa Fe, NM – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico's Third District highlighted nearly \$35 million in funding for New Mexico's rural communities through the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar announced today that 32 local governments throughout New Mexico are receiving \$34,805,383 through the program that compensates counties and local governments for non-taxable federal land in their jurisdictions.

"The PILT program provides vital resources, especially in rural areas that are home to federal land that impact revenue for local governments," Congressman Luján said. "These funds help strengthen our communities and support efforts to build schools, improve our roads, and hire first responders. In addition, Congressman Heinrich and I have been working hard to pass a straight forward re-authorization of the PILT program in the House to ensure it can continue to provide an important source of funding for rural communities in our state."

Local governments that contain nontaxable federal lands and provide vital government services, such as public safety, housing, social services and transportation are eligible for the PILT program. PILT compensates these jurisdictions – which provide significant support for national parks, wildlife refuges and recreation areas – for their support and foregone tax revenue from these federal lands. Luján has co-sponsored H.R. 3599, the County Payments Reauthorization Act, legislation he introduced with Congressman Martin Heinrich to re-authorize the PILT program.

Using a formula provided in statute, the annual PILT payments to local governments are computed based on the number of acres of federal entitlement land within each county or jurisdiction and the population of that county or jurisdiction. The lands include the National Forest and National Park Systems, those managed by the Bureau of Land Management, those affected by Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation water resource development projects, and others. A breakdown of PILT payments by county is available at www.doi.gov/pilt

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