|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| cid:image001.jpg@01D2A958.8799B760   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:** [Megan Taylor](mailto:Megan_Taylor@heller.senate.gov) | | May 2, 2017 | 202-224-6244 |   **Heller Advocates for Permanent Authorization of PILT Program**  *“I Cannot Underscore How Vitally Important This Program is to my State”*  **Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today urged the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to permanently authorize and fully fund the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and discussed the much-needed benefits it provides to each of Nevada’s 17 counties.  In a statement submitted to the record ahead of the committee’s hearing to examine the PILT program, Heller wrote: “Approximately 85 percent of my state’s lands are managed by the federal government, and most of that land falls under the purview of the Department of the Interior. Local governments across Nevada are saddled with the responsibility of providing vital public services, such as law enforcement and infrastructure maintenance, across large swaths of federal land. Given Nevada’s expansive federal estate, the PILT program makes it possible for local governments to maintain these services in lieu of the ability to economically develop and tax federal land.”    **The statement reads in full**:    *Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell, thank you for holding this hearing today. I also want to thank all of the witnesses for being here today.  I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and the important role it plays in rural states like Nevada.*  *Today, witnesses from across the West will have the ability to testify and discuss the much-needed benefits of the PILT program to rural communities.*  *As a Westerner and a Nevadan, I strongly support this program and have seen first-hand the benefits it has provided in communities across my state.*  *I stand ready to partner with you and this committee to permanently authorize and fund the PILT program in order to bring much-needed certainty for our rural counties.*  *As you know, the President’s topline budget request for Fiscal Year 2018 calls for a reduction in PILT funding that “is in line with average funding for PILT over the past decade.”  While I support the Administration’s desire to tighten our fiscal belt, any discussions to change this policy should start with Congress, and I commend the Chair and Ranking Member for holding this hearing today.*  *Hearing from local stakeholders, including Mayors, County Commissioners, and representatives from local agencies, will only further underscore the importance of the PILT program to states like Nevada and Alaska.*  *Approximately 85 percent of my state’s lands are managed by the federal government, and most of that land falls under the purview of the Department of the Interior.  Local governments across Nevada are saddled with the responsibility of providing vital public services, such as law enforcement and infrastructure maintenance, across large swaths of federal land.*  *Given Nevada’s expansive federal estate, the PILT program makes it possible for local governments to maintain these services in lieu of the ability to economically develop and tax federal land.  In fact, all of Nevada’s counties are burdened with management activities on federal lands—and the PILT program has properly reimbursed all 17 of Nevada’s counties for this important work.*  *I cannot underscore how vitally important this program is to my state, and I believe Nevada has been a good steward of this funding.*  *I recognize that some of my colleagues may question the need for this program or may even want to reconsider the program altogether, but I would like to invite them to visit Nevada.*  *In states like mine where the federal government owns the majority of the land, this is not just a program but an obligation on the behalf of the federal government in exchange for the land that they use at a loss to the taxpayer.*  *Communities across Nevada rely on this funding in order to provide public services on land that is owned by the federal government.*  *This program has been used by communities in my state to invest in local infrastructure, support nutrition programs, and ensure that the bills are paid on time.*  *This is why I support permanently authorizing and funding the PILT program.  In the 113th Congress, I was proud to team up with my colleagues to support bipartisan legislation (S.1913) that would do just that.*  *I appreciate your attentiveness to this issue, and I stand ready to work with this Committee to ensure our local governments are treated fairly by the federal government by ensuring the long-term viability of the PILT program.*  *Thank you.*  *SENATOR DEAN HELLER*  ###    [cid:image002.png@01D2A958.8799B760](http://www.facebook.com/pages/US-Senator-Dean-Heller/325751330177)[cid:image003.png@01D2A958.8799B760](http://twitter.com/SenDeanHeller)[cid:image004.png@01D2A958.8799B760](http://www.youtube.com/user/SenDeanHeller) |