



Larry Craig • Mike Crapo

United States Senators for Idaho

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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

April 11, 2008

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Craig, Crapo Seek Emergency Funding For Counties ***Join bipartisan effort to include county payments in supplemental spending bill***

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Idaho Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo are joining a bipartisan group of senators seeking to include payments to counties in an emergency supplemental spending bill before the Senate Appropriations Committee. Craig and Crapo have signed a letter headed by Senators Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) and Pete Domenici (R-New Mexico) seeking to include an extension and funding for the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act of 2000 and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program (PILT). Crapo and Craig earlier worked with Wyden and others to include provisions for county payments in the overall budget blueprint for Fiscal Year 2009.

"The letter notes that Senators already recognized the importance of these programs when it passed an extension of the county payments program last year," Crapo said. "This effort would continue assistance for rural communities struggling to provide necessary services in areas with large amounts of federal land."

"The original law we developed became a lifeline for our timber-dependent communities in 2000," Craig said. "It has directly improved the lives of people in 700 counties, 4,400 school districts and nine million students nationwide. It also helps maintain 15,000 miles of roads. Letting this law die by not funding it is not an option for the country."

Crapo and Craig added the letter to Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Byrd (D-West Virginia) and Ranking Member Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi) warns that some counties are already planning layoffs and, without further funding, could have to cut essential services like law enforcement and fire protection. The PILT program affects county programs in 49 of 50 states.

[30]