

Commissioners

From: MACO <MACO@mtcounties.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 5, 2014 8:13 AM
To: MACO
Subject: Senate sends farm bill with FY14 PILT funding to the president's desk

Senate sends farm bill with FY14 PILT funding to the president's desk

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate today voted 68-32 to send the five-year farm bill to the president's desk where later this week it is expected to be signed it into law. The House passed the conference report on Wednesday, Jan. 29 by a vote of 251-166.

As reported previously by NACo, this legislation represents a major win for the nation's counties.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) supported the final farm bill as it contains several critical county priorities including FY14 funding for the Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, reauthorization of vital programs within the Rural Development title and protection of county authority over forest roads. The conference report includes several NACo priorities on a broad range of programs that assist counties in the development of rural water-wastewater infrastructure, community facilities, broadband expansion, nutrition assistance, renewable energy, local and regional food systems, support for new farmers and business development initiatives. The farm bill would also codify the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) long-standing policy that specific silvicultural activities do not require National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits.

The key elements of the farm bill that impact counties include the following:

- PILT program is extended as a fully funded, mandatory entitlement program at \$425 million. PILT has retained full mandatory funding since FY08, with funding levels of \$393 million FY12 and \$401 million (after sequestration) in FY13.
- The Rural Development title receives \$228 million in mandatory funding including:
 - \$150 million for Water and Waste Water Program
 - \$63 million for the Value-Added Producer Grant Program
 - \$15 million for the Rural Microenterprise Assistance Program (RMAP)
 - \$100 million for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.
- Regional language championed by NACo in the Rural Development title allowing the U.S. Department of Agriculture to prioritize 10 percent of funds towards regional, multi-jurisdictional projects.
- The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is cut by \$8 billion over 10 years. The Senate farm bill (S. 954) proposed \$4.5 billion in cuts over 10 years; the House farm bill (H.R. 2642) proposed \$40 billion in cuts over 10 years.
- The conference report preserves U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's long-standing policy regulating stormwater runoff from forest and logging roads under the states' Best Management Practices (BMPs), rather than through the Clean Water Act's (CWA) industrial stormwater permit program, which has tighter and more restrictive requirements than general CWA stormwater permits. This is a huge win for counties who own and manage 44 percent of the nation's roads and highways. A number of county-owned roads run through federal, state and private forest lands. Many

of these roads are multipurpose and not solely dedicated to logging—and are used by residents, recreators, emergency responders and wildfire teams.

For an in-depth report on county priorities found within the farm bill, please click [here](#).

http://www.naco.org/newsroom/latest/Documents/farm%20bill_final%20passage.pdf

RYAN R. YATES

ASSOCIATE LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

25 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. NW STE. 500 • WASHINGTON, DC 20001 • 202.942.4207

