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BLM Issues Payments in Lieu of Taxes to Local Governments

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will send over \$218 million this year to local governments under the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Act. The BLM will distribute PILT funding to compensate almost 1,900 local governments in Fiscal Year 2003 because of the presence of Federal lands in those jurisdictions that are not subject to local taxes.

Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton continues the practice begun in 2002 of sending the PILT payments three months earlier than in previous years. The accelerated payment schedule represents the Secretary's continuing effort to coordinate with local governments as they budget for their fiscal years, many of which begin on July 1.

"PILT payments exemplify the Secretary's commitment to communication, coordination, and consultation, all in the service of conservation," said BLM Director Kathleen Clarke. "This money helps communities pay for roads, search-and-rescue operations, and other services," she added.

Congress appropriates funds for PILT payments to eligible units of local government each year. BLM calculates the payment amounts using a formula based on population and the amount of Federal land in a jurisdiction. Federal revenue transferred to local governments under other programs, such as income generated from the use of public land for livestock grazing, timber harvests, and mineral receipts, are deducted from the receiving county's PILT payments.

This year, some counties will receive slightly reduced PILT payments to adjust for increased revenue received during the previous fiscal year under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. This Act provides payments to compensate certain counties for declining timber receipts. The combination of PILT payments and payments under the Secure Rural Schools Act, however, will result in a higher overall payment to affected counties. Changes in PILT payments can also occur based on the amount that Congress appropriates for the program in a given fiscal year.

This year's PILT payments of \$218,172,589 represent an increase of more than \$8.8 million over Fiscal Year 2002. Including this year's payments, the BLM has distributed over \$3.2 billion to local governments since the program began in 1977.

All States except Rhode Island, which has almost no Federal land, are receiving PILT payments in 2003. The District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands also receive PILT payments. The States whose local governments receive the most under the program this year are New Mexico, California, and Utah. A complete list of PILT payments by State or Territory appears below.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land — 261 million surface acres — than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.9 billion and a workforce of some 10,000 full-time, permanent employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

2003 PILT Payments by State

Alabama	\$388,858	New Jersey	\$65,893
Alaska	\$15,195,983	New Mexico	\$21,397,943
Arizona	\$18,045,248	New York	\$86,806
Arkansas	\$2,834,030	North Carolina	\$2,348,077
California	\$19,245,932	North Dakota	\$966,671
Colorado	\$17,646,285	Ohio	\$522,820
Connecticut	\$28,976	Oklahoma	\$1,487,446
Delaware	\$2,802	Oregon	\$6,010,270
Florida	\$2,753,535	Pennsylvania	\$347,243
Georgia	\$1,494,535	Rhode Island	\$0
Hawaii	\$20,906	South Carolina	\$240,607
Idaho	\$15,017,041	South Dakota	\$2,501,140
Illinois	\$609,112	Tennessee	\$1,370,643
Indiana	\$361,403	Texas	\$2,585,952
Iowa	\$247,484	Utah	\$18,656,877
Kansas	\$618,163	Vermont	\$495,805
Kentucky	\$1,523,542	Virginia	\$2,296,691
Louisiana	\$311,938	Washington	\$5,104,558
Maine	\$197,212	West Virginia	\$1,620,360
Maryland	\$91,823	Wisconsin	\$483,880
Massachusetts	\$67,175	Wyoming	\$14,305,824
Michigan	\$2,349,903		
Minnesota	\$1,530,840	District of Columbia	\$17,792
Mississippi	\$859,422	Guam	\$1,842
Missouri	\$2,133,582	Puerto Rico	\$26,257
Montana	\$16,874,448	Virgin Islands	\$38,778
Nebraska	\$638,858		
Nevada	\$13,132,942		
New Hampshire	\$970,436	Total	\$218,172,589

