



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

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Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: April 25, 2023

Title of Item: Consider National Center for Public Lands Counties Contribution

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA	Action Requested:	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft)	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing* <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>

Submitted by: Jessica Seibert	Department: Administration
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Presenter (Name and Title): Jessica Seibert, County Administrator	Estimated Time Needed: 5 Min.
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Summary of Issue:

The National Association of Counties (NACO) and the Western Interstate Region (WIR) have established the National Center for Public Lands Counties (NCPLC) to demonstrate the contributions public lands make towards creating a prosperous America.

Together AMC, NACO, and WIR are asking each public lands county to make a one-time contribution equaling 1% of their 2023 Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund dollars (special ARPA allocation). Aitkin County received LATCF dollars in the amount of \$100,000, \$50,000 in 2022 and another \$50,000 to be received in 2023.

The funds collected from counties across the country will be placed in a fund similar to an endowment to be used to grow and sustain the center into the future.

Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:

Recommended Action/Motion:
Approve/Deny \$1,000 contribution to the National Center for Public Lands Counties.

Financial Impact:

Is there a cost associated with this request? Yes No

What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$ 1,000.00

Is this budgeted? Yes No *Please Explain:*

Legally binding agreements must have County Attorney approval prior to submission.



Association of Minnesota Counties

April 14, 2023

Jessica Seibert
Aitkin County
307 2nd Street NW
Room 310
Aitkin, MN 56431

Dear Jessica:

We are writing to provide your county some information about an exciting opportunity that has been developed by the Boards of Directors of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Western Interstate Region (WIR). NACo and WIR have established the National Center for Public Lands Counties to create an enhanced opportunity to demonstrate how prosperous public lands counties create a prosperous America.

Enclosed you will find a summary of the planned work of the center to use new and traditional media to tell these stories as well as develop detailed, individual research and written county profiles. This document also outlines plans for staffing, governance, and financing of the center.

To finance this endeavor, NACo and WIR are looking for a voluntary investment of \$15 million over the next two years. That amounts to one percent of the recently distributed Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF) a flexible, targeted federal investment in public lands counties. We are reaching out to you because Aitkin County is considered a public lands county for the purposes of distributing LATCF dollars. A contribution equivalent to one percent of the LATCF allocation would amount to a total of \$1,000 for your county over two years.

This new center will be a valuable resource for counties throughout the country. On behalf of AMC, NACo, and WIR we encourage your board to give serious consideration to financial participation in the center. NACo and WIR are hoping to have a sense of how many counties are interested in participating by mid-May. Your board does not need to have acted by then, but please let Ryan Erdmann at AMC know the likelihood of your county's participation (erdmann@mncounties.org or 651-789-4345). If there are questions that are not covered by the enclosed fact sheet, please do not hesitate to reach out to Ryan or to either of us.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner
President, Association of Minnesota Counties
1st Vice President, National Association of Counties

Rich Sve, Lake County Commissioner
Western Interstate Region Board Member

National Center for Public Lands Counties

County governments are a leading voice in the intergovernmental partnership in responsible resource management. Understanding our unique role as co-regulators and conveners, Congress has consistently supported appropriations for critical programs like Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) and granted new authorities to federal lands agencies to broaden the scope, pace and scale of their on-the-ground resource management work with local governments.

To truly benefit from these unique opportunities and investments, counties must accelerate our evidence-based research, peer information exchanges, and overall understanding of our lessons learned, emerging trends analysis, and priority public policy issues.

The NACo and WIR Boards of Directors therefore established the National Center for Public Lands Counties (The Center) to give public lands counties an enhanced opportunity to demonstrate how prosperous public lands counties create a prosperous America. The Center will utilize traditional and new media—such as podcasts and video interviews—to tell these stories and also develop detailed, individual research and written county profiles focused on:

- County partnerships with federal agencies, states, tribes and other counties to reduce wildfire risk, responsibly develop energy and minerals, improve public access to federal lands, protect watersheds, conserve species and their habitat, and protect our national parks and other natural treasures
- County investments of PILT, SRS and other natural resource revenue payments to benefit residents, visitors and surrounding public lands
- The different economic drivers in rural vs. urban public lands counties
- Development and implementation of county natural resource management plans and baseline socioeconomic data for environmental analyses
- Resource values of federal lands compared to nearby privately owned lands
- Meeting the unique challenges facing public lands counties, such as housing affordability for residents and federal employees, ensuring a stable tax base to deliver critical services, and managing infrastructure on federal lands

For the Center to meet its mission and serve as a long-term tool for public lands counties, a voluntary investment of \$15 million over the next two years is needed to hire the necessary staff to conduct this critical research and keep the Center on a sustainable financial course. Initially, the Center will need 1-2 hard-working, passionate and talented writers who can help tell the county story. The Center will report to the NACo and WIR Board of Directors on its financial health and issue an annual report at the annual WIR Conference.

The Center's governing body, which will :

- WIR Executive Committee (President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, Immediate Past President)
- NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Chair
- NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Subcommittee Chairs
- Federal Lands Gateway County Official appointed by the NACo Public Lands Steering Committee Chair
- NACo West Region Representative
- NACo Executive Director
- Executive Director from WIR Immediate Past President's home state

- NACo Public Lands Legislative Director and WIR Liaison, serving as NACo staff liaison to the governing board

The Center's governing board will also be empowered to develop an annual workplan based on the research priorities selected by the WIR Board of Directors and NACo Public Lands Steering Committee. At the WIR Annual Conference each May, the WIR Board of Directors and the NACo Public Lands Steering Committee will review the activities and performance of the Center, and consider and adopt the proposed workplan for the next year.

In order to leverage the expertise of NACo's public lands membership, the governing board will also have the ability to appoint research subcommittees made up of county officials, based on the research priorities selected by the WIR Board of Directors and NACo Public Lands Steering Committee, to coordinate and oversee the research efforts of the National Center. Research work conducted by the National Center will be non-partisan, aligned with NACo policy and priorities and will not directly conflict with the interests of any county.

NACo staff contact: Jonathan Shuffield, NACo Legislative Director for Public Lands, at 512.965.7268 or jshuffield@naco.org