



AITKIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Aitkin County Government Center
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May 8, 2023

Senator Mitch Berggren
Senator Grant Hauschild
Representative Patrick McQuillan
Representative Dave Lislegard

Re: Tax Omnibus Bill (HF 1938/SF 1811)
Payment in Lieu of Taxes Amendments

Dear Senators and Representatives:

On behalf of the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners, I write to ask for your support for equitable PILT funding and amendments to MSA Chapter 477A (PILT), as proposed in the House version: HF 1938/Omnibus Tax Bill.

Aitkin County is a member of the Northern Counties Land Use Board consisting of ten northern Minnesota counties hosting 65% of the state's 8.5 million acres of Payment in Lieu of Taxes eligible public lands. Aitkin County is subject to the constraints of a rural economy, vast public acreage, and the inequities of the current PILT program which causes us to be disproportionately dependent on the PILT program to support our local government operations.

The 2012 Legislature recognized this fiscal imbalance in the statewide geographic distribution of public lands by adopting an, as yet, unfulfilled purpose for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program:

M.S.A. Chapter 477A: "...to address the disproportionate impact of state land ownership on units of government with a large proportion of state land."

The House version of HF 1938 is a reasonable means of recognizing the existing disproportionate geographic and fiscal impact of the state's public lands on northern counties. We urge your support and advocacy of this increase in PILT funding throughout the Conference Committee process.

Sincerely,



J. Mark Wedel
Aitkin County Board Chair

Cc: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners