



**COUNTY**  
*of*  
**BLAND**

**BOARD OF  
SUPERVISORS**

**Karen H. Hodock**  
*Chairman*  
Rocky Gap Election District

**Lace M. Asbury, IV**  
*Vice-Chairman*  
Seddon Election District

**Randy Johnson**  
Mechanicsburg Election District

**Henry M. Blessing**  
Sharon Election District

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**Eric R. Workman, Ed.D.**  
*County Administrator*

P.O. Box 510  
Bland, Virginia 24315

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March 4, 2015

Hon. Mark Warner	Hon. Timothy Kaine	Hon. Morgan Griffith
U.S. Senate	U.S. Senate	U.S. House of Representatives
475 Russell Sen. Office	388 Russell Sen. Office	1108 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20510	Washington, DC 20510	Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Secure Rural Schools and PILT Funding**

Greetings:

On behalf of the citizens of the County of Bland, Virginia, please accept this letter urging your support for the full funding of the Secure Rural Schools Act and re-authorizing of PILT funding.

The County of Bland is rich in scenic beauty, with picturesque mountains and forests that are enjoyed by thousands annually. The views of the Jefferson National Forest offered to visitors as they pass through the county are breathtaking. With 1/3 of the county being national forest land, visitors can see wilderness for miles as they travel Interstate 77. However, localities such as the County of Bland do not have a mechanism to tax federal property. Our only source of revenue for federal land is through Secure Rural Schools and PILT funding.

The approximately 6,800 residents of this county get up daily and work hard to provide for their families and community with little protest or reservation. These same citizens are willing to provide the means for the common good. However, they cannot do it all on their own. The tax base is extremely small and every dollar of funding is critical. A 1% increase to the real estate levy only generates approximately \$26,000 annually. A 1% increase to the personal property levy generates approximately \$15,000 annually.

In 2014, the county underwent reassessment and saw a dramatic decrease in the assessed value of real estate thus requiring a \$0.05 increase to the real estate levy to just stay revenue neutral. The local school board was forced to consolidate schools into one elementary and one high school due to the funding woes. Our teachers and educational staff work diligently to provide high quality instruction even though they face low pay and lack of reassurance that their job will be there one year to another due to funding issues.

*The County of Bland is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



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By Congress not fully funding Secure Rural Schools and not reauthorizing PILT funding, it is creating a dramatic financial impact on rural counties such as Bland. In FY15, Bland County is projected to receive \$11,775.82 in Secure Rural School funding and \$0 in PILT funding. In order to show the magnitude of this reduction, in FY09, \$170,231 was appropriated for Secure Rural Schools and \$136,335 in PILT funds for the County of Bland. The county has gone from receiving \$306,896 in federal funding in FY09 to \$11,775 in FY15. The county does not have the financial means to supplement this lack of federal funds. Therefore, we request that Congress take action to fully fund Secure Rural Schools and to reauthorize PILT funding.

Again, we urge your support and advocacy on this issue. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for your service and commitment to the citizens of the County of Bland and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sincerely,

Eric R. Workman, Ed.D.  
County Administrator

Cc: Hon. Terry McAuliffe, Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia  
Hon. Ben Chafin, Senate of Virginia, 38<sup>th</sup> District  
Hon. James W. Morefield, Virginia House of Delegates, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Bland County Board of Supervisors  
Bland County School Board  
Virginia Association of Counties  
Virginia School Boards Association