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BLM Distributes \$16.9 Million in "PILT" Checks to Montana Counties for Tax-Exempt Lands

BILLINGS -- Montana counties will receive about \$16.9 million for fiscal year 2003 to compensate them for tax-exempt federal lands within their boundaries. This year's payment is about \$711,000 more than last year's total.

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, is 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 payments to Montana counties is attached.

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MONTANA PILT 2003

Local Unit of Government	Total Paid This FY
Anaconda-Deer Lodge	\$261,459
Beaverhead	513,222
Big Horn	55,158
Blaine	356,195
Broadwater	373,475
Butte-Silver Bow	289,047
Carbon	613,244
Carter	110,473
Cascade	271,612
Chouteau	205,380
Custer	445,354
Daniels	267
Dawson	86,319
Fallon	109,765
Fergus	637,201
Flathead	1,094,835
Gallatin	904,550
Garfield	111,887
Glacier	542,789
Golden Valley	40,070
Granite	127,993
Hill	64,506
Jefferson	547,266
Judith Basin	168,792
Lake	154,525
Lewis and Clark	1,251,357
Liberty	45,169

Local Unit of Government	Total Paid This FY
Lincoln	317,881
Madison	487,840
McCone	163,478
Meagher	111,745
Mineral	116,858
Missoula	628,542
Musselshell	99,470
Park	792,382
Petroleum	45,482
Phillips	261,231
Pondera	134,477
Powder River	141,855
Powell	340,988
Prairie	82,275
Ravalli	1,371,653
Richland	70,679
Roosevelt	5,528
Rosebud	433,077
Sanders	166,332
Sheridan	2,412
Stillwater	247,114
Sweet Grass	306,812
Teton	356,992
Toole	61,066
Treasure	979
Valley	524,356
Wheatland	82,134
Wibaux	35,481
Yellowstone	103,419
TOTAL	\$16,874,448