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June 10, 2021

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20585

**RE: Why Did DOE Cut School, Police and Fire Funding at Two DOE Sites Through the Elimination of Payments in Lieu of Taxes for Two DOE-Impacted Communities in FY 2022 Budget Request**

Dear Secretary Granholm,

On behalf of the Energy Communities Alliance (“ECA”), I am writing to express our dismay regarding the elimination of Payments in Lieu of Taxes (“PILT payments”) for the communities surrounding the DOE Hanford and Savannah River sites, which bear the burden of the largest environmental cleanup projects in the country in the FY 2022 DOE budget request.

PILT payments—which DOE proposes to zero out—are used to support vital local government functions such as school and hospital districts, roads and other critical infrastructure, and emergency services such as police and fire departments. Moreover, PILT funds are used by DOE-impacted communities to provide these same essential municipal services to DOE sites at levels, and in quantities, that otherwise far outstrip the community’s tax base. Even so, PILT payments are equal to only a fraction of what private companies and employees would contribute to local tax revenues for similar land and service usage. A lack of PILT payments results in a lack of ability for communities to replace aging infrastructure or attract the new industry, best available workforce, and investment necessary for DOE to sustain weapons and environmental cleanup activities at its sites.

The Department’s FY 2022 Office of Environmental Management (“EM”) budget request would eliminate EM PILT payments for the Hanford Site (a \$3.5 million cut) and Savannah River Site (a \$5.7 million cut). This action does not track with recent commitments we have heard from new DOE leadership about supporting communities. We learned about it only after combing through thousands of pages of the budget requests (as there was no DOE headquarters briefing on the budget and no direct outreach to the community leadership on the issues).

We are also wondering why these two communities were singled out by the Administration when they carry the burden of the two largest environmental cleanup projects in the country. We

thought this was an oversight, but then we see direct line items clearly marked as zero when they are currently being funded.

Adequate funding for PILT payments provides for the social and economic well-being of the communities which receive them, and is an action necessary for the defense and national security priorities of the country. Each Administration since 1954 has supported PILT payments. We ask for your assistance and support in ensuring that future DOE budget requests include sufficient funding for PILT payments to all DOE-impacted communities currently eligible for receipt.

Moving forward, it is crucial that the Administration readily supports the funding necessary for DOE to disperse PILT payments to the communities wherein they operate. At your request, ECA would be happy to provide additional information on PILT payments and the functions they serve at the local level.

If you have any questions or concerns on this matter, please contact ECA Executive Director Seth Kirshenberg at (202) 828-2317 or ECA Program Director Dylan Kama at (202) 828-2465 or [dylank@energyca.org](mailto:dylank@energyca.org).

Sincerely,



County Executive Ron Woody  
Roane County, TN  
ECA Chair

Cc: David Turk, Deputy Secretary of Energy;  
William "Ike" White, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Environmental Management, DOE;  
Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development;  
Representative Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development;  
Senator Patty Murray (D-WA);  
Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA);  
Representative Dan Newhouse (R-WA);  
Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC);  
Senator Tim Scott (R-SC);  
Representative Jim Clyburn (D-SC);  
Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC);  
ECA Executive Board