

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 17, 2015

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you begin consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we encourage you to again authorize geothermal royalty payments to counties. Unfortunately, President Barack Obama's FY 2016 budget request proposed the elimination of these payments, cutting an important lifeline for local communities. We understand and support the need to propose a fiscally prudent budget, but repealing geothermal royalty payments to counties is a short sighted method that does little to address fiscal challenges.

In the bipartisan Energy Policy Act of 2005, Congress decided that because of the high burdens geothermal production places on the counties where geothermal development is located, these counties should share in the revenue of the federal receipts. In turn, counties have used these revenues to pay for critical governmental services, such as road maintenance, public safety and law enforcement, and conservation easements. This revenue sharing has also made counties vested partners, and ultimately champions, in the continued development of geothermal energy—a clean, renewable, and domestic energy source that provides well-paying jobs in rural areas.

Ending the geothermal revenue sharing plan will have a significant negative impact on our districts, while the overall effect on our nation's fiscal well-being would be miniscule—\$4 million in 2015 and \$48 million over 10 years. Many of the counties that receive revenue from geothermal receipts are small, rural communities facing precarious budget situations. The loss of such revenue for these counties could result in the elimination or reduction of essential services.

We strongly support geothermal revenue sharing with counties and we encourage you to including this important funding in your FY 2016 bill.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and look forward to working with you to promote geothermal energy production and provide support for the surrounding communities.

Sincerely,

  
MIKE THOMPSON

  
JARED HUFFMAN

  
DOUG LAMALFA

  
CRESCENT HARDY

  
JUAN VARGAS

  
PAUL COOK

  
STEVE PEARCE

  
JOHN GARAMENDI