



## NEWS RELEASE

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# Gila County Participates in NACo Western Policy Conference

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – Gila County Board of Supervisors Chairman, Michael Pastor, and Vice-Chairman, Tommie Martin** recently participated in the National Association of Counties (NACo) 2014 Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference held in Anchorage Borough, Alaska May 21–23. The conference brought together hundreds of Western officials, major stakeholders in decisions being made at the federal level.

With critical legislative and regulatory issues being debated in the nation’s capital, county leaders discussed and addressed issues particularly important to local communities. These issues include reauthorizing MAP-21, the cornerstone surface transportation bill; securing long-term funding solutions for counties through the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and Secure Rural Schools (SRS) programs; and amplifying county voices on the newly-proposed definition of “waters of the U.S.”

Supervisor Pastor and Supervisor Martin agree, “It’s important for us to share what we’re doing well in Gila County and learn from others who are faced with similar challenges. By attending this conference, we’re able to make sure that Gila County has a prominent role in shaping key federal policies that affect our counties every day.”

The conference brought together nationally-renowned experts, state and federal policy leaders and county officials from across the country. Featured speakers included former Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski; Municipality of Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan; Alaska State Director Bud Cribley, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of the Interior; Alaska Regional Forester Beth Pendelton, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Martin Buser, four-time Iditarod champion.

In addition to the line-up of dynamic speakers, the WIR conference organized workshops for county leaders to delve deeply into topics important to the West. These discussions included county solutions for managing wild horses and burros, innovations in rural economic development and reforming county public defender systems.

WIR President John Martin, Garfield County, Colo. commissioner chair, spoke about WIR's dedication to represent counties in policy decisions affecting the West.

"Together, we can be a strong voice for Western priorities within NACo, on Capitol Hill, with the Administration and for all of our counties," Martin said. "Western leaders know how to deal with tough issues and get results for our communities."

The Western conference also provided opportunities for NACo policy committees to discuss effectively managing land and natural resources, promoting rural development and prosperity, expanding broadband access and preparing for the upcoming wildfire season.

For more information about WIR, visit:

<http://www.naco.org/legislation/policies/Pages/WIR.aspx>.

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*The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America's 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. More information at: [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org).*

*The Western Interstate Region (WIR) is affiliated with NACo and dedicated to the promotion of Western interests within NACo. These interests include public land issues (use and conservation), community stability and economic development and the promotion of the traditional Western way of life. WIR's membership consists of fifteen Western states: Alaska, Hawaii, Wash., Ore., Calif., Idaho, Nev., Ariz., Mont., Wyo., Colo., N.M., Utah, N.D., S.D.*