

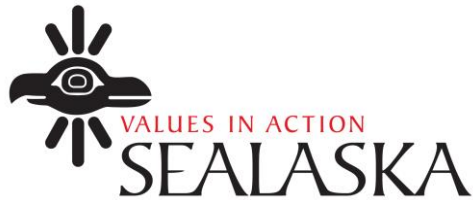
# **House Finance Committee**

## **HB 72 — Operating Budget**

**Additional Written Testimony**

**Received since noon Friday**

**March 6, 2015**



HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
TESTIMONY ON OPERATING BUDGET  
March 3, 2015

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of Sealaska Corporation, the Alaska Native Regional Corporation for Southeast Alaska established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Sealaska Corporation represents more than 21,000 shareholders of Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian descent.

Sealaska has general concerns about proposed budget cuts and their impacts on the rural communities in Alaska, and particularly in Southeast Alaska. In addition, Sealaska has specific concerns with regards to cuts associated with the State Division of Forestry, the Alaska Marine Highway Service, and Education, as outlined below.

**Alaska Division of Forestry**

It is our understanding that the Governor's budget cut the Division of Forestry Budget by \$1.3 million, and that the House Finance Committee proposes to cut an additional \$2 million. The Southeast Alaska timber economy is highly dependent upon the continued participation of the State timber program, the U.S. Forest Service timber program, and private timber programs (including Sealaska). If any one of these participants is removed from the equation, we fear that the entire industry will collapse. The proposal to cut the State Division of Forestry budget could mean our fears are realized.

We need the Committee to reconsider these cuts to the Division of Forestry for the following reasons:

- The Division overseas compliance with the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) by private landowners. The FRPA has a history of being one of the best state forest practices acts since enacted and as amended. This Act requires the Division to conduct implementation activities and effectiveness monitoring, which cannot be done without field staff and funding.
  - The local field staff is necessary for timely processing of FRPA paperwork and on-site inspections.

- The cuts will result in the closure of the Division's offices in Southeast Alaska, which will impact our regional economy and the delivery of important services within our Region.
  - These activities ensure that the desired protection of public resources, including anadromous fish habitat and water resources, are achieved.
- The Division of Forestry is also an important source of timber for the local industry. In order to protect existing jobs and infrastructure in our region, we need timber from federal, state and private sources. Where there are shortfalls in the federal timber supply, the private landowners and the state timber sales have been able to fill the gap to keep industry alive.
  - The Division of Forestry's timber sales provide a source of positive revenues for the State of Alaska, which average \$698.5 thousand per year over the past ten (10) years. The loss of these revenues will result in further reductions to the State's general fund.
  - The Division of Forestry personnel also completes timber sale work on behalf of the State Mental Health Trust and the University of Alaska Trust Land Programs, which generates revenues for those important trust programs in the State of Alaska. This creates efficiencies to meet forest management needs for multiple state agencies.
  - Many small businesses that are involved in high value added processing of Alaskan wood will be impacted by lack of wood supply, including those that produce cedar shakes, music wood, wooden bowls, downhill skies, log cabins and log homes. This will also result in loss of associated jobs and commerce important to the State and the Southeast region.
  - Hundreds of miles of roads in the State forests will be need to be closed because they will not be adequately maintained as a result of these budget cuts. These roads are important for recreational activities, as well as for access to the State's natural resources.

### **Alaska Marine Highway Services**

On behalf of our Southeast communities, Sealaska would like to express its concerns about additional cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway Services. These services are critical to our rural communities for continued access to the hub communities of Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan for health care and other resource needs. For many of our

rural residents, this is the only means by which to travel outside of their communities, as air travel is cost prohibitive.

In addition, these services are important for our schools, local governments, and local businesses. For the schools alone, it will be difficult for the students to travel to and participate in extracurricular activities that are critical to student development and education. With decreased or unavailable barge services to our communities, the Alaska Marine Highway is also the only means for our grocery stores and service providers to bring in supplies and to stock their shelves.

The availability of the services has decreased significantly over the years, and our communities cannot afford any additional decreases in these services.

### **Education**

Quality education for all students has been a major concern and priority of Sealaska. Sealaska is keenly aware of the state's fiscal situation. However, in your deliberations and decisions that you must make surrounding which state programs should be decreased, eliminated or maintained, we urge that educational funding be among your highest priority.

Schools across the state have endured years of budget cuts and those budget cuts are now reaching into the classroom with less teachers and increased classroom sizes. Programs that served disadvantaged students and led to improved academic achievement are being eliminated.

We are appreciative that the Legislature provided increased funding in the last session. While it is our understanding that the majority of those funds were dedicated for PERS/TRS with minimal funding to the operating budgets of schools, Sealaska nevertheless urges you to restore to the budget the one-time education funds that were approved last session.

Although most of our villages are characterized by depressed economies, our People are known to help one another in time of need. We are willing to make the same sacrifice for education. Some citizens will be opposed to a special educational tax because of our billion dollar permanent fund; however, we would urge the Legislature to reassess and reinstate the one time education tax on out-of-state workers, in order to recoup some of the financial benefits that are taken out of the state each year by the multitude of workers who come to

Alaska and who work in the seasonal trades and leave at the end of the season.

The state's investments in our students and schools will contribute to healthy citizens and communities, which will reduce health and social service costs in the future and will support a long term productive work force that can contribute to Alaska's economic growth and sustainability. Education and Alaska's economic health are interrelated.

### **Conclusion**

We urge this Committee and the legislature to ensure that the budget cuts under consideration do not disproportionately impact our rural communities. We also hope that you will avoid detrimental cuts to the Division of Forestry, the Alaska Marine Highway and to Education.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of Sealaska Corporation. We know that you will take these comments into consideration as you make final determinations about the State budget.

**From:** [Andrea Hirsh](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#); [Sen. Dennis Egan](#)  
**Subject:** Alaska Budget concerns  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 6:05:53 PM

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Hello Senator Egan, Representative Kito, and Representative Muñoz,

I am writing you today out of concern for two things that are not currently in next year's budget which I feel should be. I am a Alaskan citizen who has resided in Juneau for the last two years.

The first of these is the Online with Libraries (OWL) program. The OWL program has two HUGELY important components, which I want to make you aware of. First, OWL provides libraries and schools across the state with bandwidth. Access to the internet is incredibly important; a study by the federal reserve in 2008 found that students who have access to the internet are 6-8% more likely to graduate high school than peers who do not have access to the internet. Additionally, more and more job applications are moving online. But it is equally important to note that not all people have access to the internet, due to prohibitively high costs. This is why internet in a free and public location, such as public libraries, is incredibly, incredibly important and why the bandwidth and hardware provided by the OWL program is so important. Everybody should have the opportunity to succeed, and more and more that also means that everyone needs access to the internet.

The second important thing that OWL does is provide access for people in Juneau (and across the state) to learn and reach people through their videoconferencing system. Tomorrow, for instance, I will be attending a panel discussion and workshop called "Northern Voices on Homelessness" which will have experts talking about the problem of homelessness in Alaska, in addition to solutions that different communities have found. I will be able to talk to, see, and interact with people all over the state FOR FREE because of this service that is available in my local library and funded by the state. This is just one example of how the OWL videoconferencing system is used; I know that it's also used to spur economic growth (businesses conduct board meetings) as well as being used by the government (the social security administration plans to conduct hearings over OWL so that judges don't have to fly to Juneau), and more. So many neat things are offered over this program that help so many different people.

The second program I am concerned about cuts to is the Online Homework Help (or Tutor.com) program. I'm not exactly sure what it's called in the budget. I know that the state allocated over 100,000 last year to this program, which has been very successful and is very important. This program allows any Alaskan to get hooked up with a live tutor in almost any subject. They have tutors from kindergarten all the way to intro level college courses. They also help people edit their resume's and get prepared for job interviews. This program is amazing; all the tutor's I've ever had were super helpful and I learned a lot. I think this program is very, very important for Alaskans in general. Here in Juneau tutoring is very expensive (meaning that students that are from more wealthy families are more likely to be able to use it), but it is available. This is often not the case in smaller villages throughout Alaska, especially in the fields of mathematics and hard sciences like chemistry, physics, calculus, and more. If we want our students to be ready and able for college and the workforce, especially in the desperately needed STEM fields, than we need to make sure that those students have the ability to succeed in school. And that means giving students access to

really smart people who are trained to help them succeed. Not all teachers (especially in the villages) have the skills (and time!) to teach and tutor in EVERY subject. This service, which is open to all Alaskans, can.

It is the job of the state to ensure that all students (and all people, really!) have access to basic necessities such as education. These two programs (OWL and Online Homework Help) are really important components of helping people succeed. They also help people economically, as people are more likely to get a job if they can have their resume and cover letter edited by a professional (Online Homework Help), which can be submitted to companies online (OWL).

I know that the budget is a huge balancing act; things need to be cut because of decreased revenues. I accept that many programs that I think are important will have to take some cuts. But I think that cutting both of these programs completely is not in the best interest of Alaskans and will damage individuals and the economy in the long run. I hope that you will take what I have said into consideration. These programs are really important and deserve to be funded by the state.

Thank you  
Andi Hirsh

**From:** [Avery Bolt](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Alaska Construction Academy Training  
**Date:** Sunday, March 08, 2015 10:11:57 AM

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I have been told the powers that be are considering cutting the Alaska Construction Academy training program. That would be a shame. Their free class has helped me get a considerable advantage on a waiting list for a future construction job, as well as taught basic skills to many others. I had hoped to take further training to make myself a more valuable worker as well in other fields besides carpentry, like perhaps welding.

I urge you to consider other ways to curb spending than cutting this resource that could very well be the difference between myself and others making a good wage and working a low paying non skilled one, or having no job at all and having to rely on some forms of public assistance that would cost the state even more.

Sincerely Avery Bolt



**From:** [Jessica Tipkemper](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Alaska Marine Highway Funding  
**Date:** Sunday, March 08, 2015 2:38:52 PM

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I live in Gustavus, Alaska with my two children where I teach at the local school that they also attend. As a single parent, like many in the state, I have to budget carefully in all areas, particularly travel. The presence of the marine highway in Southeast Alaska makes it possible for residents to not only obtain supplies in a cost-efficient and timely manner, but also contribute to the local economy.

To illustrate, in order for me to get supplies from Juneau, I have to have them shipped to me via careful planning, or go into town, shop and bring supplies back. If I am flying, this means I am paying airfare for myself and both of my children in addition to the supplies and freight costs. I am not going to do this regularly, as the cost is exorbitant. Without the ferry option, I order from Costco, get the basics and wait until my next big trip to [maybe] do some shopping on the way back home.

However, the ferry option changes everything. Instead of paying for three round trip flights and freight, I pay much less via the ferry, take my car, go shopping and fill it up with supplies- more than I would be able to reasonably transport via plane, or than I would likely purchase and have shipped.

Residents like me are contributing to the Alaskan economy in a significant way because of the Alaska Marine Highway. I probably buy 3-4x as much when I take the ferry than when I order or fly. Without the ferry, I'll be ordering a lot more from Amazon for the free shipping. This only hurts the businesses in Juneau that I otherwise am able to support.

Beyond the impact on the economy, the Marine Highway also contributes to our cultural and societal well-being. Young people, especially, need to get out of their villages and see other people and places in order to feel inspired to do their best. Being able to send students on trips via the ferry system makes a big difference in the socio-emotional well-being of our children.

I understand that some cuts are probably going to be necessary, but hopefully you have a sense of the importance of this resource to Southeast communities. At the very least, we need our ferries to come and go from our villages once every other week. This way, we can still plan trips that are long enough to do business, but not so long that we have to rent a hotel room for a week or more at a time.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,

Jessica Tipkemper



Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chair House Finance Committee

Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chair House Finance Committee

Email: lgscfin@akleg.gov

March 6, 2015

RE: Current level of funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System.

I am writing to you as the Borough Mayor of the Petersburg Borough and on behalf of the Borough Assembly and the Petersburg Community.

It has come to our attention there are proposed cuts of up to \$10 million, in the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) upcoming budget. These proposed cuts will have a devastating effect on our Borough citizens, and our local economy.

The community of Petersburg has long been underserved by the AMHS, and we have expressed our concerns in the past, asking for improved service which we feel would increase ridership and economic value to our community. While we understand the fiscal condition of the State, it is hard to justify shutting down our "road system". You could liken it to closing the Glenn Highway for five out of seven days. My guess is this would be as unacceptable to the Alaska residents serviced by this road as is reducing service to those communities utilizing the ferry system.

The Petersburg Borough, and our community as a whole, join with the other communities served by the AMHS system in asking for your support in maintaining the current level of funding for the AMHS.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Jensen", with a long, sweeping underline.

Mark Jensen  
Mayor  
Petersburg Borough

**From:** [Vivian H.](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Alaska's Early Learning Programs  
**Date:** Sunday, March 08, 2015 3:55:54 PM

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I believe the legislature should support important Alaska's early learning programs for young children: Parents As Partners, Best Beginnings (Imagination Library and Partnerships for Families and Children), and the Pre-K Programs. There is overwhelming research to show that this is one of the most important investments we can make to ensure Alaska's future economic and social wellbeing. It should be a priority even in the current tight budget situation. --Vivian Hegg, Juneau, Alaska.

Sent from Windows Mail

**From:** [Paul Barnes](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Pete Kelly](#); [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#); [Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov](mailto:Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov); [Rep. Sam Kito](#)  
**Subject:** AMHS Public Comment--Gustavus, AK  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 7:06:30 PM

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Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Please consider coastal communities who rely on the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service in Alaska when considering further budget cuts. In the small town of Gustavus where I have been a resident since before the inception of the ferry service, I use it for my work/business, recreational and medical/dental needs and to visit elderly family in Juneau when they are in need. In addition, I have many friends who depend on the ferry system as long term employment to support themselves and their families.

AMHS cannot absorb a cut of this magnitude in a single year without serious long-term effects of the entire system and all those who rely on it--locals and tourists. Please honor the published schedule this summer which is a lifeline for so many communities across the coastal region. Please urge the Legislature to allow the established Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB) these few months to plan for cuts to be implemented next year.

Thank you for your consideration to recognize AMHS as an integral part of our lives.

Sincerely,

Paul Barnes, Gustavus, AK, 99826

cc: Governor Walker, Senator Pete Kelly, Senator Anna MacKinnon, Senator Egan and Representative Kito

**From:** [melissa](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen. Pete Kelly](#); [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#); [Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov](mailto:Dennis.Egan@akleg.gov); [Rep. Sam Kito](#)  
**Subject:** AMHS Public Comment--Gustavus, AK  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 7:02:17 PM

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Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

Please consider coastal communities who rely on the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service in Alaska when considering further budget cuts. In the small town of Gustavus where I have been a resident since before the inception of the ferry service, I use it for my work/business, recreational and medical/dental needs and to visit elderly family in Juneau when they are in need. In addition, I have many friends who depend on the ferry system as long term employment to support themselves and their families.

AMHS cannot absorb a cut of this magnitude in a single year without serious long-term effects of the entire system and all those who rely on it--locals and tourists. Please honor the published schedule this summer which is a lifeline for so many communities across the coastal region. Please urge the Legislature to allow the established Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB) these few months to plan for cuts to be implemented next year.

Thank you for your consideration to recognize AMHS as an integral part of our lives.

Sincerely,

Melissa Senac, Gustavus, AK, 99826

cc: Governor Walker, Senator Pete Kelly, Senator Anna MacKinnon, Senator Egan and Representative Kito



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March 6, 2015

Reps. Mark Neuman and Steve Thompson  
Co-Chairmen, House Finance Committee

Note: delivered via email address: [lhscfin@akleg.gov](mailto:lhscfin@akleg.gov)

Dear Co-Chairs Neuman and Thompson,

The Freezer Longline Coalition (FLC) urges the House Finance Committee to reject reductions to the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) budget recommended by the Finance Subcommittee on Commerce, Community and Economic Development. These cuts, if passed, will lead to lower values for Alaska seafood and have an adverse impact on state tax revenues.

#### **About Freezer Longline Coalition**

The FLC represents the owners and operators of vessels participating in the freezer longline sector of the Alaska cod fishery in the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands and the Gulf of Alaska. Over half of our members are wholly Alaskan owned or have partnerships with Alaskan entities, and many of our members' 30 active vessels are based and serviced in the State of Alaska. Our newest vessel in our fleet, the F/V Arctic Prowler, was constructed in Ketchikan (completed in 2014), generating over \$30 million for the city's economy. In 2015, the freezer longline fleet will contribute over \$300 million to local economies and provide over 1200 full-time positions.

#### **ASMI funding generates revenues for the state**

The mission of ASMI is to raise the value of Alaska seafood. Over the past 15 years, ASMI has had a tremendous effect on increasing Alaska seafood prices. State funding allocated to ASMI annually produces a substantial return on investment for the state's economy. In 2004, ASMI's budget was \$11 million and fishermen earned \$1.3 billion. Over the past three years, ASMI's budget was \$22 million and fishermen earnings exceeded \$2 billion. ASMI's marketing efforts are effective and have put nearly one billion additional dollars per year into fishermen's pockets and helped to rebuild fishing assets across Alaska.

The seafood industry is the largest private sector employer in Alaska, and contributes directly to more communities than any other industry. ASMI branding increases the value of Alaska seafood, which means processors can sell it for more, fishermen get more for it, communities see greater economic impact, and the state receives greater tax revenues.

In light of reduced state revenues, it's expected that the budget will include reductions to state agencies and programs. However, the subcommittee's recommendation to cut ASMI's general funds budget by over 39% (\$2.9 million) represents a disproportionate reduction

relative to the 5-8% overall reduction to the state budget, even if you only account for discretionary funding programs. The proposal is over twice as large as the 16% reduction proposed for ASMI in the Governor's budget.

Alaska seafood has earned the trust and respect of consumers around the world through relentless attention to sustainability, product quality, and Alaska's image. ASMI is critical to maintaining the value of our fisheries to all stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Chad I. See  
Executive Director  
Freezer Longline Coalition



2303 West Commodore Way  
Suite 202  
Seattle, WA 98199  
Office Phone 206-284-2522  
[chadisee@freezerlongline.biz](mailto:chadisee@freezerlongline.biz)

**From:** [Dakota Jones](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** AYC Testimony  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 1:12:05 PM

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I have testimony about why the state needs to continue funding AYC. I wasn't able to email it last night; hopefully it's not too late.

My name is Dakota Jones. As the Chief Judge of Anchorage Youth Court, I am very disappointed to hear that the Senate is considering eliminating funding for Youth Courts across the state in an attempt to save money.

Ultimately, this is an extremely short-sighted solution. A recent study by the McDowell Group estimates that Youth Courts save the state around \$400,000 more than they cost; this is due to things like decreased recidivism rates, decreased use of police resources, and decreased use of the resources of correctional facilities. I've seen the impact that these programs has kids. They allow them to learn from their mistakes, but at the same time, they don't create a permanent record that follows them around for the rest of their lives.

Ultimately, these programs are extremely valuable to the star. Cutting funding them would be a colossal mistake; Youth Courts around the state require this money simply to function. I urge you to keep the finding for AYC in the budget.

Thank you,

Dakota Jones



**From:** [Kerstin Schmitt](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** best beginnings  
**Date:** Sunday, March 08, 2015 9:03:59 PM

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Good evening,

I have learned that the State of Alaska is trying to cut some spendings and a few cuts have to do with early education.

We moved to Alaska a few months back and have a son who is almost a year old. He loves books and I was very excited signing him up for the imagination library when I found out about it.

I am one of the fortunate mothers who can stay home with my child and go to the library and get books, take advantage of story time etc.

However, I know many mothers who can not take advantage of those programs because they have to work, and imagination library is a great way for them to be able to get books to their homes and get their child/children to read.

There are statistics that a high percentage of inmates in prison can not read and that an adult who does not read well might wind up unemployed because he or she will always have difficulties finding or keeping a job.

It is my strong believe that there is a connection of reading to a young child and the outcome of his or her later life.

In my opinion it is very important to keep programs which help with reading, early education, school education, homework help etc., since cutting those programs might help save some money now, but in the future there will be other expenses which would not be necessary.

Thank you for your time reading this.

I hope you make a decision which is considering the long term effects as well.

K. Schmitt

**From:** [psterm](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** budge cuts to public broadcasting  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 8:35:18 PM

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hello:

I want to express my opposition to the proposed cuts to public broadcasting in Alaska. The extent of the cuts are simply too great. Public broadcasting stations in alaska do not operate independently of each other.

Major stations in Fairbanks and Anchorage both produce content aired by the smaller community stations or operate translators that retransmit their signals to some of the small communities. This coverage is important to the quality of life in the small communities.

KUAC in Fairbanks faces a inordinate effect from proposed cuts. The station's funding comes from a mix of state grants and funding through the university budget. The university is proposing their own cuts, so KUAC's funding faces a "double" whammy of cuts from both the state and the university.

Please reconsider how heavily public broadcasting in interior Alaska will be impacted by budget cuts coming from 2 different directions.

Thank you,

peter stern

**From:** [Klukwan Library](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** budget  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 1:21:21 PM

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Hello, I work in the library and I can see how much it would hurt the community if we loose the OWL and Live homework help funding. I know that there needs to be cuts but it sure would hurt if we loose funding for the libraries across Alaska. Thank you. Genevieve Stevens

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Klukwan Community and School Library

Hours: Monday - Saturday

**Monday** 8:30 am -1:30 pm Gen 1:30 pm -5:30 pm Jamie

**Tuesday** 8:30 am -1:30pm Gen 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm Jamie

**Wednesday** 8:30 am -1:30 pm Gen 12:30 pm 3 pm Jamie

**Thursday** 8:30 am 1:30pm Gen 12:30 pm -3 pm Jamie

**Friday** 8:30 am -1:30 pm Gen 1:30 pm 6 pm Jamie

**Saturday** 9 am - 11: am Gen

**Closed on Sundays**

Library Catalog:

<http://destiny.chatham.sd.org>

Chilkat Indian Village Website:

<http://chilkatindianvillage.org/>

For tours, artists and info on Hospitality House

<http://visitklukwan.com/>

*"The mission of the Klukwan Community and School Library is to serve as a resource for all community members bringing the power of information, imagination and inspiration to the people while promoting and preserving the Tlingit culture."*

**From:** [scot wheat](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cuts to KBBI Public Radio Broadcasting  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 2:12:33 PM

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Dear Legislator:

I have had some disastrous health experiences that resulted in “too much” time being confined to bed or recliner. Hospital, home, and unemployment. I could hear radio better than see television, and needed hope to live.

Radio has been my life line. Radio has been my inspiration. Right now the Ted Talk radio hour is on, and encouraging me to keep living a life of benefit to others.

Cancer was eating me up, so upon diagnosis in 2009, I was given maybe 8 weeks to live without treatment. There was an accident during chemo therapy on May 20,2009, that resulted, over time, in me having minutes to live, due to congestive heart failure, due to sepsis. In a third development April 9, 2012, an incident had me dying in a few hours, if not helped.

Point is, I would be dead without encouragement over the air by KBBI Public Radio, and would completely give up now, without the hope that people care about those of us who sometimes can not be a part of society in person.

Please consider the impact of such large cuts to the state budget on our local radio station.

Take the money from DVR; public radio has helped me more in the last two years than the inept rehabilitation services provided to me through state DVR.

Thank you for your time, and potential to help someone like me, who really needs the lifeline of public radio.

Scot Lewis Wheat.

**From:** [Seldovia Public Library](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** cutting E-rate funding  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 7:40:07 AM

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Hello! I just wanted to take a minute and tell you how important OWL/E-rate funding has been for the community of Seldovia and request that this funding please not be cut in the budget. Without the E-rate discounts we receive, we can not afford to pay for the greater broadband width and internet speed we are currently getting, which means we probably won't be able to do video conferencing programs anymore for our community. OWL/E-rate has resulted in 1) our library being opened more hours, 2) more patrons coming to our library (almost double), 3) more computer/wifi users (almost double), 4) a lot more programs for the community, 5) greater collaboration with our local school (teachers have started volunteering at the library and bringing their students down), and 6) community members valuing our library more. Outside of our library, there is only the Sea Otter Community Center that community members/visitors can go to access public internet and computers and they have really limited hours (even more so than the library). Thank you for considering my comments. Again, please don't cut OWL/E-rate funding.

Tracie Merrill, Board Member  
Seldovia Public Library  
PO Drawer H  
Seldovia, AK 99663  
907-234-7662  
<<http://seldovialibrary.wordpress.com/>>

**From:** [Kevin Ritchie](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Draft legislative cuts to programs negatively impacting youth and the vulnerable.  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 2:38:16 PM

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To: House Finance Committee

From: Kevin Ritchie

Date: March 6, 2015

Re: Draft legislative cuts to programs negatively impacting youth and the vulnerable.

I am retired. I am not employed by or represent any program or agency being discussed for budget cuts.

I strongly believe that it is not in the best interest of Alaska to cut programs that serve youth and the vulnerable. These programs provide potentially life-saving services, and many actually reduce State and local costs in the future.

Even if these programs are restored in the future, their absence will have permanent negative impacts on the individuals currently being served. Also, most programs, including schools, have long term benefits, not only on the individuals served, but the State of Alaska as a whole.

For example, the Youth Court program costs far less than incarceration or any other intervention. The recidivism rate for Youth Court participants is 3% within 6 months and 16% within 24 months. As a rough comparison, the recidivism rate for the Alaska Department of Corrections is 63% for 2010. (SOA website) The short term and long term savings to the State by diverting youth from crime are huge.

Such budget cuts are, in a sense, like suicide, in that suicide is recognized as a permanent solution to a short term problem. This is a short term problem for Alaska because Alaska has so many more resources and capacity than any other state.

As an Alaskan since 1976, I remember paying Alaska State income taxes. It was a simple form, and I don't recall any public outcry until massively overflowing state coffers made income taxes unnecessary. I am also a proponent of using a larger portion of Alaska's vast savings to help protect the youth and the vulnerable, as well as Alaskans in general. It is the long term costs of failing to protect Alaskans that we cannot afford.

Thank you.

**From:** [Amanda Kiely](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Early Literacy & LIVE Homework Help  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 1:11:07 PM

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House Finance Committee,

I am writing in regard to your recent proposition to cut the Alaska State Library Early Literacy Programs and the LIVE Homework Help. It is with great concern that I write you. These programs are vital the health of Alaska families and to consider ending them is irresponsible and doing a great disservice to Alaskans. Early literacy skills are fundamental to preparing children not only for later school success, but also for success in their lives as productive adults and active members of our communities and economy. Please reconsider this decision and do what is best for children in Alaska: fully fund these programs.

Thank you,  
Amanda Kiely  
Ketchikan, AK



**From:** [Katie Sanders](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Education funding  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 12:27:43 PM

---

Good day folks. Thank you for tackling this enormous task of creating a balanced budget. In my opinion education is absolutely essential in order to create and maintain an educated citizenry. In my mind this includes fundamental building blocks like library services.

If the education funding promised in HB278 and cut by the governor is not reinstated, in our district not only will classroom teachers be cut by many other programs including library services are targeted for cuts.

I attended a wonderful training session yesterday morning hosted by the Fairbanks school district's Alaska Native Education department, which was focused on the Tlingit and Haida cultures. Byron Mallott was a guest speaker but they also had a young exuberant storyteller and examples of print and kit resources available to support learning about these cultures. One of the guests asked if there would be more resources made available to teach about all of the Alaskan native cultures. I realized with the impending cuts the districts efforts to improve access to those very kinds of resources would come to a rapid halt.

Our district is utilizing its library services to responsibly make a small amount of funds provide resources across the entire district for all of our students and staff. Libraries are a very cost effective means to provide for all.

Please help us maintain this fundamental service for our students by reinstating the one time funds for education.

Thank you for your time.  
Katie Sanders  
4031 Marsha Ave.  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

**From:** [Linda Wynne](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Fund OWL, Live Homework Help, and Early Childhood Initiatives  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 1:22:48 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)

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To House Finance Committee:

I am writing to you about funding OWL, Live Homework Help and Early Childhood Initiatives. Especially the OWL because it is

the conduit between urban and rural Alaska. Since we do not have a comprehensive road system, rail system, and other transportation

systems like the lower states; the broadband that brings the Internet to access government website, employment opportunities,

online schooling, connecting with families through social media, and outreaching to the world outside of Alaska boundaries.

This is what OWL does for our rural communities bringing the world to their door step. Please reconsider funding these

much needed programs that keeps Alaska together.

Sincerely,

Linda Wynne



**Linda Wynne, MLIS**

**Records Manager**

**Sealaska Corporation**

**One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 400**

**Juneau, AK 99801**

**T: 907.586.9246**

**C: 907.723.0887**

**Fax: 907.463.3897**

[linda.wynne@sealaska.com](mailto:linda.wynne@sealaska.com) [www.sealaska.com](http://www.sealaska.com)

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**From:** [LIO Mat-Su](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Alaska"s Budget  
**Date:** Monday, March 09, 2015 7:49:08 AM

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**From:** Cathleen Teich [mailto:cathyt@mtaonline.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 06, 2015 4:47 PM  
**To:** LIO Mat-Su  
**Subject:** Alaska's Budget

Please forward this POM to: Senators Mike Dunleavy, Charlie Huggins, Bill Stoltze  
Representatives Wes Keller, Mark Neuman, Lynn Gattis, Shelley Hughes, Cathy Tilton, Jim  
Colver

Take the \$33.5 million away from AEA and put it to better use: education, ferry system,  
troopers, etc. The proposed Susitna-Watana dam's estimated cost will more than likely  
double, from \$5.2 to \$10.4 billion. It is fiscally irresponsible and a bad idea.

Cathy Teich  
[cathyt@mtaonline.net](mailto:cathyt@mtaonline.net)  
733-2155

**From:** [Danny W. Aukon Jr.](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Headstart  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 11:45:29 AM

---

Our children in rural Alaska or anywhere, for a matter of fact are going to be our next hope in our future. We need to give them the best start possible. It is up to us, being that they cannot control their own future. We can at try to give them the best start they can have. Taking away Head Start from a child decreases their chances for successful transition from home life or preschool into grade school. Let's not take away the step that helps them to a good education. They need us now as we will need them in the future. I feel that any one that is willing to take away education to a child is reversing history. Notice that I said "willing". That means we do not have to go down that path. Education should not be an option for budget cuts. We will only hurting ourselves along with their future.

Grandparent,  
Danny W. Aukon Jr.

**From:** [Jennifer Robinson](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** In Support of Education Funding  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 5:05:52 PM  
**Attachments:** [Resolution 2015-01 - Letter to House Finance Committee.pdf](#)  
[Resolution 2015-01 In Support of Meaningful Education Funding Increases.pdf](#)

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Dear House Finance Committee,

Please find attached a letter and resolution in support of education funding. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time,

Jen

--

***Jennifer Robinson***  
**Executive Director**

**The Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce, Inc**  
Office 907.747.8604 | Cell 907.738.2664

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**From:** [sharon whytal](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#); [Sen. Gary Stevens](#); [Paul Seaton](#)  
**Subject:** local public radio  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 3:46:14 PM

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Hi,

I know these are challenging times for AK budgetting. It may also be too late to make a difference, but I just got back to town and am devastated by the possibility of the proposed 59% cuts, amounting to 77,000 dollars at my local station alone, KBBI. I hope you will advocate to minimize this drastic cut. Public radio is the voice for thinking about divergent opinions on all the news that matters....this is not available in AK communities in any other way, since few have tv or cable access. I personally count on it for my news daily. Music and other shows ensure our access to the outside world in a quality of life way; these are just as important for the awareness of all Alaskans. Please let me know where you stand on this vital issue, and thanks for all you do in making good policy for Alaskans.

Respectfully,  
Sharon Whytal

Date: March 5, 2015

Subject: NACTEC General Fund Cuts

To: House Finance Committee

My name is Dr. Robert Bolen, and I am the current Superintendent of the Bering Strait School District. On behalf of the 1800 students attending one of fifteen schools in the Norton Sound region, I am writing in support of the Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center (NACTEC) and requesting that legislatures reconsider the proposed financial cuts to the program.

As the former Principal of Savoonga and Saint Michael, the programs provided by NACTEC to the students of our region are invaluable and unable to be provided by our individual schools within our villages. The ability of NACTEC to provide training opportunities to all students of the Bering Strait Region cannot be replaced by any other current program. Every year, I sent ninety to a hundred students to receive training and life skills for jobs that are important to the future of the region and state. We know that not every student will be college bound; therefore, it is vital that we provide our high school graduates with the vocational skills necessary to be productive citizens in their communities.

It is unfortunate that the members of the House Finance Subcommittee chaired by Representative Wilson believe that the job of educating children is solely the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Development. Programs like NACTEC have the ability to train an entire generation of young people who will graduate high school having learned the skills necessary to enter the workforce successfully.

Although budget times are tough and the future is uncertain, I believe it is a mistake to cut funds that ultimately provide a tremendous benefit to the economical impact of our region.

Thank you for your time and consideration to the future of our students.

Sincerely,

*Robert Bolen*

Robert Bolen, Ed.D.  
Superintendent, Bering Strait School District



**From:** [Sigrid Brudie](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** OWL funding  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 11:17:35 AM

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I am the outreach librarian for Alaska Medical Library at UAA and travel to rural communities in Alaska to promote medical library services and resources at hospitals and clinics. I make a point to stop in public libraries in these communities to provide information on free consumer health resources. From what I have observed, the improved Internet capability and conferencing opportunities that OWL has provided to these communities has been hugely beneficial in helping community members connect with individuals and agencies throughout the state, breaking down the isolation that can be so difficult in these places. Please continue to fund the OWL project that is so vital to remote Alaska communities.

Sincerely,

Sigrid Brudie

**From:** [Christa B](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** OWL Network funding  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 7:45:45 PM

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Dear Sir:

As Education Director for the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council, I have found the OWL Network a critical piece in reaching out to working artists in rural communities. On March 7, 2015 we will broadcast a Teaching Artist Academy to nine sites in Southeast Alaska. We are providing professional development opportunities that would not be possible without the OWL. People would have to travel to Juneau or Anchorage in order to train to work in the schools. As many artists as we have in our area, it is a shame that so few are eligible.

I tried many ways to connect our area and the OWL was the only tool that worked. The libraries and UAF are enormously helpful.

Please support the OWL with their full request. You would do the public in the rural areas a tremendous disservice to cut service. Our roads in SE are the ferry system. The OWL is our connectivity for learning. The system brings equity to the state.

I would be happy;y to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for listening.

Christa Bruce  
Education Director  
Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council  
330 Main Street  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
[907-821-0003](tel:907-821-0003) (m)

**From:** [Rosalie Loewen](#)  
**To:** [Rep. Sam Kito](#); [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** OWL program  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 2:03:05 PM

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Dear Representative Kito and other members of the House Finance Committee,

I just learned that the House Finance Committee has chosen to cut support for the OWL program. I think that this is wrong decision.

The library uses OWL funds to provide internet connectivity to all library users, regardless of their ability to pay. In my opinion, this is of vital importance to those who are struggling. Access to the internet helps to even the playing field in a society where the gaps between classes are increasingly marked and difficult to cross.

Imagine trying to find and apply for employment without access to a reliable and relatively high speed internet connection. Imagine trying to take a class or to get training (such as your food handlers card) without access to the internet. Providing connectivity gives people an opportunity to better themselves.

In our community, as in many others, internet at the house is a significant expense and I have been glad to see that people can come into the library and access the 21st century even if they are struggling to cover rent and groceries..

For this reason, I would ask for your continued support for funds that assist libraries in Alaska with internet connectivity.

Thank you for your time.

Rosalie Loewen

**From:** [Sara Jeffress](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Please Fund Early Childhood & Libraries  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 2:44:22 PM

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Good Afternoon,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the proposed budget cuts impacting early childhood initiatives, including Best Beginnings, and Alaska State Library programs like Online With Libraries and Live Homework Help. As a parent, a librarian, and a community member in the Mat-Su Valley I feel strongly that the loss of these funds will be detrimental to the future success of our youngest, most vulnerable citizens.

I respect the fact that every effort has been made to keep classroom funding at 100%. But by cutting early childhood development, rural broadband access (Online With Libraries), and Live Homework Help you cut the knees right out from under those classrooms. Each one of these programs lends valuable, quantifiable assistance to classroom teachers, increasing graduation rates and future productivity.

In the broad scheme of our state budget these are small expenditures that lead to big rewards. Please keep funding for Best Beginnings, Online With Libraries, and Live Homework Help at 100%.

Sincerely,  
Sara Saxton  
907.830.3486

**From:** [Kathleen E Fearer](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Please retain OWL (online with libraries) funding  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 1:05:34 PM

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Greetings Committee Members and Staff.

I am writing in support the OWL program, and the appropriation necessary to keep it afloat. OWL is critical for remote communities with low bandwidth to carry on some of the day-to-day communication and learning necessities that the rest of us take for granted. Rest assured, if the legislature does not fund OWL this year, many Alaskans will no longer have the internet access they need to do everything from applying for the PFD to taking courses online. I have used OWL myself to reach out to communities across Alaska. I recall one session in particular, when folks from the Coast Guard gave a talk on boating safety. During the session, Alaskans were able to identify real steps they could take in their communities to save lives that might otherwise be lost on the water.

I know that you have a difficult job. Revenue is shrinking, and the state needs to save money. But OWL is critical infrastructure for the well-being of so many Alaskans; please find another way "make ends meet."

Best regards,

Katie Fearer  
Juneau, AK

**From:** [April Folkes](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Please stop funding the Susitna dam  
**Date:** Sunday, March 08, 2015 7:02:26 PM

---

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

I believe it is absurd to even consider spending tens of millions more on a mega dam project as we lay off teachers, cut oil spill response, and cut service to the Alaska Marine Highway. There are far more responsible ways for the State of Alaska to spend \$33.5 million than studying a dam that will never be built.

The House Finance committee should withdraw those funds from AEA for the Susitna dam project and shut it down completely. The Susitna dam does not make sense for Alaska and further spending on this project would be a waste. Please stop the spending now and refocus funds on higher priority funding issues facing the State.

Sincerely,

April Folkes  
5805 N. Farm Loop Road  
Palmer, AK 99645

**From:** [Ruth Sheridan](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Please stop funding the Susitna dam  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 10:25:27 PM

---

Dear Committee Members,

As you tackle the enormous challenges of our budget deficit, I would urge the House Finance committee to withdraw any remaining state funds for the Susitna dam project, and reassign them to one of many other programs that need and deserve support in our state.

As an Alaskan I am appalled by the continued investment in the proposed Susitna dam, despite widespread opposition. To date Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) has spent over \$190 million on studies pursuing a dam license, yet they have noted that they need at least \$100 million more to get this project to permitting. Despite this need, AEA also told Senate Finance that they have over \$30 million in the bank. They noted that they did not need additional state funds this year and could continue studies with the funds they have.

I believe it is absurd to even consider spending tens of millions more on a mega dam project as we lay off teachers, cut oil spill response, and cut service to the Alaska Marine Highway. There are far more responsible ways for the State of Alaska to spend \$33.5 million than studying a dam that will never be built.

The House Finance committee should withdraw those funds from AEA for the Susitna dam project and shut it down completely. The Susitna dam does not make sense for Alaska and further spending on this project would be a waste. Please stop the spending now and refocus funds on higher priority funding issues facing the State.

Sincerely,

Ruth Sheridan  
4704 Kenai Ave.  
Anchorage 99508  
Anchorage, AK 99508

**From:** [Tok Community Library](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#); [Rep. David Talerico](#)  
**Subject:** Please support funding for libraries & the OWL project  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 12:07:03 PM

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Representative Newman, Co-Chair House Finance Committee  
Representative Thompson, Co-Chair House Finance Committee  
Representative Talerico

I'm writing to request that you try to retain funding for the State Library system, the OWL Project, and Live Homework Help.

I'm the volunteer director of the Tok Community Library, which is 100% volunteer operated with no paid employees, and we really depend on the annual Public Library Assistance Grant to pay for our lights, heat and purchase of new audio, video, and print materials for our patrons.

We also rely on the OWL Project to help us provide Internet service not only for our local patrons but also for other Alaskans and tourists traveling through the area. Last year the OWL project paid about \$3,000 towards our Internet service and E-Rate funding paid close to \$60,000 to enable a connection only 1/4 the speed of the average for Alaskan libraries, and 1/40th the national average speed. Although our current connection speed is relatively slow, it is 6 times faster than the connection we could afford prior to the OWL Project.

The OWL funding helps us to leverage the E-Rate funding. Paperwork to qualify for the E-Rate funding is horrendous and we have no one locally who is able and willing to do the paperwork. State Library and OWL Project personnel do the paperwork and heavy lifting for us; without their help, we would not get that E-Rate assistance.

The Internet has become the main means by which people interact with their government, conduct research, and connect with far-flung friends and relatives. People use the Tok Library's computers and Internet connection to file tax returns, obtain tax forms and publications, search for jobs, submit unemployment claims, look up Alaska statutes and regulations, obtain local and national and international news, find health information, sign up for ACA insurance, make Alaska Ferry reservations, and much more. During the summer months in our tiny community, it is quite common to have 6 or more people at a time using the service; if we lose OWL and E-Rate and have to drop back to a narrower connection, only one or two people at a time will be able to use the connection.

I realize that there is no choice about cutting the state's budget during our current fiscal crisis, but I think you should also be considering additional sources of revenue, such as re-instituting the old school and disaster taxes (inflation adjusted) and either a statewide sales tax or income tax. The benefit of the school and disaster taxes and income tax is that everyone who works in the state, including those who take all their earnings out of state, would be helping to pay for the services we and they all enjoy. I would be opposed to discontinuing the Permanent Fund Dividend; it has an incredible positive impact on the state's private sector economy and for residents would help to offset the cost of the additional taxes I'm suggesting.

Thank you for taking the time to read this; I know that you have a really tough job trying to determine where best to make the budget cuts that have to be made.

Sincerely,  
Kathy Morgan, Librarian  
Tok Community Library



**From:** [Jeanne](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Please support public radio  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 4:41:43 PM

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Please support public radio and TV. These things link us together as Alaskan.

Sent from my GCI smartphone.

**From:** [Kelly Arnold](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Proposed budget cuts for early childhood programs  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 11:43:51 PM

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March 6, 2015

To Whom it May Concern,

I am very concerned about proposed budget cuts to the early childhood programs in our community including Widening the Net Preschool, Best Beginnings, and Imagination Library. These early childhood education programs are much needed by the families and children in our community. It has been proven that the first five years in a young child's life are the most important for growth and development. These early childhood programs help children develop in all developmental domains including cognitive, social/emotional, gross and fine motor skills and language. My son attends the Widening the Net Preschool at Goose Bay Elementary in Wasilla, Alaska and he has grown so much! This is his second year attending preschool and he is already achieving higher marks for his age in just literacy alone!

I am not only a mother but I am also a full time student majoring in Early Childhood Education. I have learned that during the first five years of a child's life their brains grow and develop at an amazing pace! Preschool classrooms are full of stimulation in all areas of development to help children's brains grow! The amazing preschool teachers we have care about the children they teach and plan beautifully prepared preschool environments that contain materials in all subject areas including art, math and science, literature, music and many other materials for the children to manipulate, build with and explore with. As a community we should support our children's growth at the time that they need it the most. These children are part of community and party of our future. We need to give them the best start possible! Taking away the funding for these programs would be detrimental to the development of young children in our community. Please reconsider cutting the funding for these very important and much needed programs.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,  
Kelly Utkin

P.O. Box 874404  
Wasilla, AK 99687  
Phone: 907-414-7548

*"My friends are my estate." Emily Dickinson* 

**From:** [FRED C BRETTHAUER](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** PROPOSED CUTS TO THE AK MARINE HWY SYSTEM  
**Date:** Monday, March 09, 2015 7:27:51 AM

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**I have read about the proposed cuts to the Alaska Marine Highway system for this summer and beyond. We own a RV Park in Haines, Alaska and a large amount of our business comes from RV travelers doing the Golden Circle route which includes a ferry crossing between Haines and Skagway. The ferry makes it easy for them to make this route without a great deal of backtracking. We also have caravans consisting of 22 or more large RV units that utilized the ferry system to cross between Haines and Skagway. i would estimate that 75% or more of our business would be greatly affected by reduced service. If RV travelers can not make a crossing they will, at best, make a choice between Haines or Skagway considering that they would need to make a 350 mile round trip to see like towns. With the White Pass train Skagway would probably win out if they needed to make a choice.**

**The tourist use of the ferry system in the summer has to comprise a major part of the ferry's traffic. It would seem counter productive to reduce service during your highest usage period.**

**We also rely on the ferry to make frequent buying trips to Juneau. The majority of supplies that we need for our operations are not available in Haines at a reasonable price. Trying to have those items shipped into Haines would increase our operating costs substantially.**

**I would request that the State should maintain the published schedule for this summer due to the large number of people who have made plans to use the ferry system. During that time the ferry system should try to make changes to make the system more efficient. It may be time to consider the cost that the various unions within the ferry system make upon the system.**

**The AMHS is vital to our business and without it operating in a reasonable manner we would probably cease to exist.**

**FRED C BRETTHAUER  
HAINES HITCH-UP RV PARK, INC.  
P O BOX 383  
HAINES AK 99827-0383  
[FCB@HITCHUPRV.COM](mailto:FCB@HITCHUPRV.COM)  
907-766-2882**



**From:** [David Berg](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Cc:** ["Tom Abbott"](#)  
**Subject:** Public Broadcasting funding support  
**Date:** Saturday, March 07, 2015 12:23:38 PM

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Ladies and Gentlemen

I'd like to address and advocate for continued funding for public radio.

KFSK-FM in Petersburg is our only source of news and public information available to us on the airways. KFSK also provides entertainment and opportunities for young people in our community to learn about broadcasting and even participate in writing news stories and reporting.

As a Firefighter, I also appreciate the work that KFSK does to be available and on-call 24 hours a day to spread important information like Tsunami warnings, ammonia leaks from local seafood plants, other emergent and PSA's with important Fire/EMS messages to the community.

We'd be lost without the connection we have with one another thru our public radio station.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

David Berg

David Berg,

Viking Travel, Inc. / [www.AlaskaFerryVacations.com](http://www.AlaskaFerryVacations.com)

Box 787

101 N Nordic Drive

Petersburg AK 99833-0787

907-772-3818

907-772-3940 - Fax

<mailto:David@AlaskaFerry.com>

**From:** [jim.dory@gmail.com](mailto:jim.dory@gmail.com) on behalf of [Jim Dory](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Public radio funding  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 3:20:00 PM

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Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislatures

I am writing in support of continued full funding of the KUAC public radio station that the legislature has wisely previously seen to do.

As you know, over half of KUAC is funded by community efforts and contributions. The remaining funding is heavily relied on for continued service to the station and its many translator stations. I am writing from Nome, a community that has been blessed with a KUAC translator station - a truly quality of life upgrade here.

Nome also has two local stations that do a good to great job to provide for the markets they serve. One is run by the local Covenant religious group, and the other is a Catholic station. However, they cannot afford to provide the national programming, nor draw from the larger community talent pool such as Fairbanks, which does help provide the quality of life I speak of. Public radio programs help lift us from the mundane, and educate us on many levels. KUAC also helps the translator stations such as Nome maintain their broadcast equipment, thus helping to keep us on air. Nome also participates in the community fund raising efforts by KUAC, though I am skeptical we could double the contributions we do make.

I am aware of the difficult nature of finances the legislature has to deal with this session. I am also acutely aware of the disproportionate nature of this cut. All stations will be deeply impacted, especially our station and other translators. Myself and my group of friends would actually support a state income tax to help in these tough times. I realize that you would have a very tough time selling this to your constituents, but I come from a progressive group that sees the need to rid ourselves of dependence on fossil fuels such as oil, and to do that, I can see no real alternatives than an income tax. I say this (nobody likes paying taxes) to express how much I want to keep public radio alive and thriving in our state. (It would also be important to keep our education system thriving).

Yours, with respect on this 6th day of March 2015,

James Dory  
PO Box 333  
Nome, AK 99762

**From:** [Amy K. Marshall](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony Followup for AlaskaOWL, Live Homework Help, Early Literacy, and SchoolBAG Grant  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 4:14:01 PM

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To:

The Honorable Mark Neuman  
The Honorable Steve Thompson  
The Honorable Dan Saddler  
The Honorable Bryce Edgmon  
The Honorable Lynn Gattis  
The Honorable Cathy Munoz  
The Honorable Lance Pruitt  
The Honorable Tammie Wilson  
The Honorable Les Gara  
The Honorable David Guttenberg  
The Honorable Scott Kawasaki  
The Honorable Mike Hawker

From: Amy K. Marshall, Director, Craig Public Library

Date: 6 March 2015

Re: HB 72 Proposed Cuts to the AlaskaOWL Program, Live Homework Help, Early Literacy and the School Broadband Access Grant (SchoolBAG)

Dear Representatives,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you last Wednesday about rural librarians' concerns in regard to the proposed loss of programs vital to our patrons and the public. I realize the budget situation for the State of Alaska in FY16 is nothing short of dire. I do not envy any of you in the positions you are in as you seek to find solutions that will allow the State to remain fiscally solvent, but not injure those institutions that seek to provide education, economic development, and quality of life services to the public. Because the AlaskaOWL is such an emotional topic for librarians across the state, I would like to take a moment to set it down to brass tacks. Last year, for example, the Craig Public Library received a subsidy of just over \$9,000 to bridge the gap between our 90% e-Rate subsidy (the highest subsidy allowed by e-Rate, which speaks to the poverty in our area), the cost to the City of Craig, and the real cost of managed broadband (a 1.5Mbps connection). Last year, the real, quantified benefit to the citizens of Craig and greater Prince of Wales Island who use the broadband and videoconferencing for classes and trainings was \$114,766. If you extrapolated these numbers out across 100 libraries, the ROI for the \$791K the state invests in the AlaskaOWL Project far outweighs the State's investment. Because the Craig Public Library's broadband was upgraded to a whole 3Mbps in October of 2014, the subsidy from the State will be \$13,000 in FY16. Needless to say, broadband in remote areas to libraries is expensive, but the cost of not subsidizing connectivity is far higher. Should the OWL be cut, the Craig Public Library will not be able to afford viable broadband. The library will not be able to provide WiFi, and we will revert back to where we were in 2010, when I was unplugging the internet because of a fear of going over our data limit. Just today, I had a

gentleman who is in a UAS distance learning course come in to have an online test proctored. I mentioned that, if the OWL is cut, there is a very good chance we won't be able to provide that service anymore because our speed won't allow Blackboard to load. There is nothing quite like being on a conference call with peers in the Lower 48 who say things like, "Oh, we'll just do that as a Google Hangout." And I have to say, "My internet won't support that. I only have 3Mbps." They are amazed. And stunned. And very sorry for me. Yet, I know where the library came from. This new connection surpasses anything we've had in the past.

In addition, we will not be able to offer Certified Food Protection Manager courses and proctor the tests. Businesses will have to send employees to Ketchikan, at great expense, for this training. Some may tell you that some libraries use OWL for "frivolous" things like Statewide Bard-a-thons, or dance classes, or programs about the music of inner Asia. In rural areas without access to museums or arts councils or colleges or enrichment opportunities on a local level, these things aren't frivolous, they add immensely to the quality of life of our small communities.

I would also urge to you consider Live Homework Help. In rural areas where tutors are not abundant, this service of the Alaska State Library is an absolute Godsend for students whose parents may lack the ability to assist with homework. I'm not good at Algebra beyond the quadratic formula. As a parent, I can tell you how invaluable this service is. I have two teenagers who are getting ready for college. Live Homework Help has been wonderful. In addition to math help, there is a proofreader who can help with things like resume building and college essay submission. The resume building piece of Live Homework Help is so fantastic that I recommend it to patrons who are looking to polish their resumes. It sounds trite, but I steered a young man to that service three weeks ago when he walked in to the library and said, "I need a job, but I don't know how to make a resume." Last week, he came back, beaming, because the person at the other end of the connection helped him with his resume and he had just landed a full-time, year round job. Those are the stories that come out of libraries. Those are the stories of real Alaskans that you need to consider as you move forward.

In Craig, our Head Start shut down. This happened last month. Because I, as a true believer in all things literacy, am unwilling to sacrifice early literacy training for the four year olds who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall, I have been working to create Early Literacy programs to supplement what families are doing to prepare their children to succeed in school. The loss of Best Beginnings and Ready to Read would be devastating. Right now, there are 84 children aged 0-5 who are part of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library -- the funding for which comes from the state's Early Literacy Programs. In the schools, STRIVE has done so much to help children who have difficulty reading. We need to work to ensure that children receive the best programs possible while in Preschool and Kindergarten. The window is very small in which we can have the greatest impact. We cannot afford to get this wrong.

Finally, there is the SchoolBAG Grant -- \$5M to ensure that rural schools are upgraded to 10Mbps and connected. As the schools are facing online standardized testing, this would seem to be not just a good idea, but essential. I can tell you that on the first day of the "test" of



AMP, internet in some libraries crashed. A phone call to GCI told me that there had been a “catastrophic failure” within the system. Putting two and two together gave me the answer that Alaska’s infrastructure is not at a place where 26,000 school children can simultaneously download a test client. Because connectivity is so important to be citizens of the 21st century, I do hope you would consider this when making your budgetary decisions.

Again, I realize that there needs to be a \$3.5B cut in the budget. I just want these cuts to be fiscally responsible. To spend millions of dollars -- grant dollars obtained through the US Department of Commerce -- on infrastructure only to abandoned it is, to me, fiscally irresponsible. I have watched, rather closely, things that have happened in places like Michigan and Ireland and Greece -- places that have implemented austerity budgets. I would urge you to not go down that path. I would urge you to be creative, to think beyond the commodities from which we currently derive funds for the State coffers. I would urge you to not relegate rural citizens of Alaska to second class citizenship in the digital and real world. Libraries Leverage Alaskans’ Futures. Please allow us to continue to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I have every hope that you will work hard to do the right things for Alaska and her citizens -- both urban and rural.

Sincerely,

Amy K. Marshall  
Director  
Craig Public Library

**From:** [Jessie Morgan](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#); [Rep. Sam Kito](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony OWL Live Homework Help  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 12:03:26 PM

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Dear Alaska Legislators,

I work for the Haines Borough Public Library and am writing to urge your support for the funding of Alaska OWL and Live Homework Help. The House's rationale behind cutting these programs from the governor's budget states there are no measurable outcomes from Alaska OWL and Live Homework Help programs.

It can be argued that Live Homework Help will best show results that can be measured after students have experienced its effects over a course of years. The kind of aid it offers doesn't necessarily have immediate outcomes – but they are important, and 'immeasurable', to use your word, but with the opposite connotation.

As to Alaska OWL: I don't know how you can say the funding has generated no measurable results. Clearly no staff in the libraries funded through this valuable program was consulted. We, in Haines, can state unequivocally our patrons have benefited greatly from this program. We are the only public hub for internet in this community of 2,600 people, and are used heavily. Because of Alaska OWL subsidies we were able to increase our bandwidth from less than 1 mbps to 3 mbps. This is a valuable service in a community where many people can't afford to pay for an internet connection. If Alaska OWL loses its funding we will have to return to our old provider at the lower internet speed.

The videoconferencing equipment and the support offered from the OWL office connects 97 libraries. We use the setup for library to library communication and training, which we could not afford otherwise, and patrons use the Alaska OWL equipment to take classes and share programs with other cities (total number of uses last fiscal year was 35, with 253 people benefiting from same).

Internet access in rural Alaskan communities usually depend on libraries. By cutting Alaska OWL, libraries will lose a vital program that serves thousands of community members, including Alaska Native peoples. Patrons of public libraries and its services have access to tutorials, digital literacy, social media, health resources, and presentations over video conference through the Alaska OWL technology. Without the support of Alaska OWL, rural communities will be cut from crucial access to information and resources that help us participate, communicate, and stay up to date in local, state, national, and global issues.

Many of the libraries who are subsidized by OWL will be forced to return to dial-up service or to forgo internet connectivity altogether.

Please put the funding for Alaska OWL and Live Homework Help back into the state's budget, and help keep our remote, far flung communities connected.

Thank you,

Jessie Morgan

Education/Cultural Coordinator

Haines Borough Public Library

907.766.3830

[education@haineslibrary.org](mailto:education@haineslibrary.org)

**From:** [Pauline Plumb](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** RECONSIDER: Support Funding for Early Childhood Education  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 8:11:34 PM

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Early childhood education and family programs are **IMPERATIVE**. During this critical time of children's growth & development, these programs are needed more than ever. This isn't about "would be nice" programs - it's about our only hope for Alaska's future: the children! Please reconsider budget recommendations, and **FUND** early childhood education programs for Alaskans.

Pauline Plumb  
Juneau, Alaska  
March 6, 2015



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESOLUTION 2015-01**  
**IN SUPPORT OF MEANINGFUL EDUCATION FUNDING INCREASES**

**WHEREAS**, the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce mission is to promote, support and facilitate commerce and economic growth in the community; and

**WHEREAS**, quality local schools encourage the in-migration of families, increasing our immediate and future labor supply as well as bolstering our local economy; and

**WHEREAS**, inadequate funding negatively impacts the ability for the Sitka School District to continue valuable programs for our students that work to keep children in school and prepare them for college or career readiness; and

**WHEREAS**, access to quality education has been shown to raise incomes and increase productivity while failures in educating our workforce are associated with higher levels of crime and welfare dependency resulting in public funds that might have been used for education being redirected to crime control, drug treatment and welfare programs, and

**WHEREAS**, the overall skill level of our local labor force is one of the key drivers of local job and wage growth; and

**WHEREAS**, skilled workers and a quality labor force give businesses incentive to operate and grow in Sitka, giving us a competitive edge that encourages economic growth and prosperity.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce recognizes the significant return on investment that quality education provides, generating real, quantifiable results for workers, businesses and the community of Sitka as a whole; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Sitka Chamber supports meaningful increases in education funding and urges our local, state and federal governments to keep a long term perspective while take a leading role in education; and

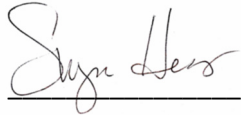
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution shall be effective immediately; and

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the officers and agents of the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce be and are hereby authorized to take all action necessary to effect the foregoing resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce in accordance with its organic documents at a meeting of the Greater Sitka Chamber of Commerce held on

March 06, 2015 and said resolution appears in the record of said meeting as set forth above. Dated this 6th day of March, 2015.



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Suzan Hess, President



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Jennifer Robinson, Executive Director

**From:** [James Alborough](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** SAVE OWL FUNDING  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 2:48:12 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to voice my support for the OWL program and to request that OWL funding be re-instated into the budget.

In Haines, we have seen concrete, measurable and demonstrable benefits from being part of the OWL program:

Since connecting with OWL, public internet use in Haines has risen by 54%. We've participated in 84 videoconference programs with a total local attendance of over 400 and we've had several students at the high school, college, and graduate school level participate in classes or complete course work that would have been impossible prior to OWL. **The total value for our community's use is calculated at \$461,460 per year.**

Internet costs will be prohibitive to us without OWL support. We will not have videoconference capabilities, free Wi-Fi or the ability to afford the current speed of 3 Megabits per second.

Sincerely,  
James Alborough  
Chair, Haines Borough Public Library Advisory Board

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James Alborough  
907-766-2082



**Sitka Tribe of Alaska**  
**456 Katlian Street**  
**Sitka, Alaska 99835**  
Main: 907-747-3207 Fax: 907-747-4915

Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chair House Finance Committee  
Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chair House Finance Committee  
Email: [lgscfin@akleg.gov](mailto:lgscfin@akleg.gov)  
Juneau, Alaska

March 4, 2015

RE: Maintain current level of funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System.

I am writing to as the chairman of Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and on behalf of the Tribal Council and Tribal Citizens.

It has come to our attention there are proposed cuts, up to \$10 million, in the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS).

The proposed cuts will have a devastating effect on our Tribal Citizens, City and Borough citizens, and citizens for the State of Alaska, particularly in the coastal communities the AMHS serves. The service area includes 33 Alaska communities that stretch along the Aleutian Chain, to communities on Kodiak Island, to communities along the Kenai Peninsula, to communities in the Prince William Sound, and all along Southeast Alaska.

The community of Sitka has long been underserved by the AMHS, and Sitka Tribe of Alaska has worked with the City and Borough of Sitka for the past few decades to improve service.

The proposed budget cuts will have a very negative impact on the AMHS service. However, at minimum, the current level of funding allows to keep necessary AMHS service levels that are critical for our coastal communities that have ferry service. For Sitka Tribe of Alaska there are a number of areas the AMHS service has critical impact, from cultural to commerce, from pre-secondary education activities to meeting necessary health needs, from keeping obligations of pre-sold tickets to keeping the schedule that our local citizens have come to depend upon.

Sitka Tribe of Alaska respectfully requests your support in maintaining the current level of funding for the AMHS.

Respectfully,

Michael Baines, Chairman



**From:** [Krista Phillips](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Support Early Childhood Funding  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 5:33:17 PM

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Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

As a citizen, a professional, and a mother of a 6 year old kindergartener who grew in countless ways from early childhood education (preschool), I am offering my support for early childhood funding and for the restoration of funding for Best Beginnings, Parents As Teachers and PreK. Prepared young children are the brightest future Alaska could ever realize.

Sincerely,

**Krista R Phillips**

**From:** [Deborah Gravel](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#); [Rep. Sam Kito](#)  
**Subject:** Support OWL and Live Homework Help  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 10:21:43 PM

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Dear Alaska Legislators,

I am writing to urge your support for the funding of Alaska OWL and Live Homework Help. These programs are essential to Alaska communities. They are an investment in our future and small rural Alaskan towns and villages depend on OWL for internet and educational and cultural connection.

This is a valuable service in a community where many people can't afford to pay for an internet connection. The videoconferencing equipment and the support offered with OWL connects 97 libraries. We use the setup for library to library communication and training, which we could not afford otherwise, and patrons use the Alaska OWL equipment to take classes and share programs with other cities.

Please put the funding for Alaska OWL and Live Homework Help back into the state's budget, and help keep our remote isolated communities connected.

Thank you,

Deborah Gravel, Haines Borough Public Library

PO Box 1089

Haines AK 99827

[ill@haineslibrary.org](mailto:ill@haineslibrary.org)

**From:** [npj@mtaonline.net](mailto:npj@mtaonline.net)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Youth Court Funding  
**Date:** Friday, March 06, 2015 8:47:42 PM

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My name is Janee Wilson and I am a member of youth court. I support youth court because it helps young people learn from their mistakes and move on with their lives knowing that they need to make better choices. And through this I feel that youth court does a great job at helping the community.