

# Alaska Dispatch News

Published on *Alaska Dispatch News* (<http://www.adn.com>)

[Home](#) > Research cuts at Alaska universities would protect today's ignorance at tomorrow's expense

Carl Benson

February 24, 2016

**Main Image:**

[Fairbanks Stock Photos 25 - 20150909.jpg-1441935197](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

The University of Alaska is committed to teaching, research and public service. Among these, research is least understood. Some people think research means looking things up in the library, but research in a university means creation of new knowledge.

In any state, the state university plays a unique and sacred role in government. It is the place where future leaders of society receive their education, and where knowledge is archived, analyzed, discussed, taught and made available to the public through extension services. Visual and performing arts are perfected and presented, and new knowledge is created by vigorous research. There is a synergy among these three commitments and the whole is bigger than the parts. The university's role in improving music, drama, visual arts and overall quality of life in Alaska increases in proportion to the way all three of these components are strengthened and increased in scope.

Research in particular keeps faculty members at the cutting edge of their fields, and brings enthusiasm and creativity to teaching at both graduate and undergraduate levels. It also provides research projects and thesis topics for graduate students, and it allows the university to broaden its scope, activities that are otherwise impossible.

The University of Alaska is situated in the midst of a vast natural laboratory for research in the physical, biological and social sciences. The laboratory (Alaska) sprawls across what used to be four official time zones. It covers 57.5 degrees of longitude, which equals the span from Maine to Washington. North to south, it extends through 20 degrees of latitude, from 51 to 71 degrees. In other words, it extends from a latitude south of London, England, to within 19 degrees of the North Pole. And the coastline of Alaska, on two oceans and the Bering Sea, exceeds the combined coastlines of all the other states, including Hawaii. Most villages are reached only by air or water transportation, and English is a second language in many places.

Alaska's size, variety and sparse population incur responsibilities for the state government that no other state even dreams of. It is also a challenge, and a unique opportunity, to be engaged in research aimed at understanding this big, multifaceted country. Alaska's university has stepped up to this challenge.

The only thing that exceeds the size and complexity of Alaska is our ignorance about it. We treat this ignorance by research and teaching. The University of Alaska is now a world leader in research of the Arctic and sub-Arctic, and has become internationally famous for it. This is a source of pride for Alaska, as well as a source of funding.

However, the lack of general understanding of research leads to absurd suggestions such as, "The University of Alaska should stop doing research and use 'all that money' for teaching." But the research money, more than 80 percent from the federal government, is restricted to its intended

purpose and not available for teaching. So to stop doing research would only mean a net loss of funds to Alaska and closing most graduate student opportunities at the university.

It is also important to realize that if the University of Alaska ended its research activity it would not stop Alaska research from being done. Instead, our share of it would simply be taken over by other universities in the U.S. and in foreign countries. We could significantly reduce or even stop the spending of federal research dollars in Alaska. If this happened, someone would eventually ask: "Why is all this research in Alaska and the Arctic being done by people from Outside? Why not base some of it here?" That might get us going again on the long, slow, difficult process of rebuilding what we now have.

Many of our graduate students have gone on to leadership roles in Alaska industry, government and consulting firms. Indeed, research is an important item in the economy of Alaska (which has been the case for several decades). Research at the university interacts with research in private, state and federal agencies, which have based their research components nearby. It makes sense for Alaska to develop this evolving "smoke free" industry.

The university is committed to teaching, research and public service, and research contributes to both of the other components.

**Carl Benson** is emeritus professor of geophysics at the Geophysical Institute at UAF. He lives in Fairbanks.

*The views expressed here are the writer's own and are not necessarily endorsed by Alaska Dispatch News, which welcomes a broad range of viewpoints. To submit a piece for consideration, email [commentary@alaskadispatch.com](mailto:commentary@alaskadispatch.com) [2]. Send submissions shorter than 200 words to [letters@alaskadispatch.com](mailto:letters@alaskadispatch.com) [3] or [click here to submit via any Web browser](#) [4].*

**Source URL:** <http://www.adn.com/article/20160224/research-cuts-alaska-universities-would-protect-todays-ignorance-tomorrows-expense>

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[3] <mailto:letters@alaskadispatch.com>

[4] <http://www.adn.com/content/submit-letter-editor>

**From:** [Fran Conlan](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 10:54:37 AM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!  
There are many ways to cut the state budget without raising taxes...

Thank you,  
Fran Conlan  
3511 W 31st Ave  
Anchorage, AK 99517

**From:** [Tom Moran](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON FY2017 OPERATING BUDGET  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 11:09:00 AM

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Greetings:

Please let this e-mail serve as written testimony in support of Governor Walker's proposed budget. Governor Walker has been faced with a very unique challenge that I do not envy one bit. Our state's economy, predicated on the oil industry, is on the brink of collapse. While some of our citizenry urges us to "Cut the fat!," we all know that there isn't anything to cut. Alaska is entitled to the same level of government services that the rest of the country receives. The economies of our continental brethren, however, have not been based wholly on what appears to be a dying industry. Just like the next Alaskan, I hope for a return to the days of \$100+ per barrel...but I'm not holding my breath. And even if oil prices suddenly do soar, the fact will remain that our economy is a one-trick pony. It's time to diversify our interests and protect our infrastructure. Many people in the lower 48 call Alaska a "Libertarian state," but I believe that perception has been colored, in large part, by the fact that we do not adequately tax our citizenry, while literally paying them for their citizenship. I am not advocating for a tax-and-spend government; rather, I am advocating for our government, with whichever party is in the leadership, to see the writing on the wall and change with the times. My sentiment is that it's time to turn the page on the old way of doing things. Please count this testimony as a ringing endorsement for a budget that increases revenues rather than decreases expenditures.

Most sincerely,

**Thomas C. Moran**

**City Manager**

102 Division Street

P.O. Box 281

Nome, Alaska 99762

P: 907.443.6600

F: 907.443.5349

*"Do more than is required of you." - General George S. Patton, Jr.*

24 February 2016

Dear Rep. Wilson and Members the House UA Finance Subcommittee,

I appreciate and applaud you for undertaking the extremely difficult task of resolving Alaska's budget crisis. It's understandable that everything must be on the table. However, the proposed unprecedented cuts to the FY17 UA budget being entertained by your subcommittee would cripple the university statewide. That, I believe, would be against the best interests of the state: The university is one of our most important economic drivers, and it's responsible for developing the potential of our most precious resource—our children as well as others who come from outside Alaska to study here. Please scale back the proposed cuts to something more closely approximating the Governor's proposed budget for the university.

I ask this, firmly believing that in order to meet our current fiscal crisis, we will need not only to cut government support of existing programs, but also make use of part of our permanent dividend fund, and institute some forms of taxes. All of us will be impacted and everyone I know is willing to shoulder personal sacrifices to bring our state through these difficult times.

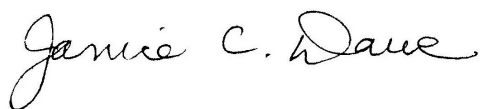
I also want to speak in this letter about the foundational importance of the university's tripartite mission of education-research-service. I provide, as one example, the program I lead for the School of Natural Resources and Extension:

OneTree Alaska strives to integrate the university's tripartite mission in everything we do, whether in the classroom, lab, or field. We engage students (both K-12 and university) directly in research and discovery, and we make opportunities available for students to extend their hard-won knowledge through service to the community. Since 2012, we have worked intensively with over 2,000 K-12 students and provided professional development courses for more than 50 K-12 educators statewide. Our teachers are taking our approach and integrating it into their teaching styles, not only in rural and urban Alaskan communities, but also in the Lower 48 (Texas, New York, California, perhaps elsewhere). The approach we use is one of the best ways, research shows, to improve STEM education: in terms of concepts learned, knowledge retained and habits of thought applied successfully across disciplines. It's not too much to say that the tripartite mission of the university provides the building blocks that can generate societal change, including commercialization of innovations and, in doing so, gives the best hope for solving the large social, economic and environmental challenges our state, nation, and world face today.

Please restore much of the proposed additional cuts that have been made for the university's budget, over and above the Governor's proposed operating budget.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jan C. Dawe".

Jan Dawe

Ph.D., Research Assistant Professor of Natural Resource Education and Outreach  
Lead of OneTree Alaska and K-20 STEAM Education  
UAF School of Natural Resources and Extension  
907-388-1772 (cell); 907-479-8343 (home)  
PO Box 82003, Fairbanks, AK 99708

**From:** [Gretchen Clarke](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** support for public broadcasting  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 1:14:13 PM

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Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing in support of public broadcasting and the vital role it plays throughout Alaska. While I appreciate the difficult financial circumstances facing the state and the difficult decisions that must be made, public broadcasting, like police and fire, plays a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities. A 100% cut would cause serious and permanent financial harm to the public radio stations around the state, including my own local station, KCAW. Stations would be forced to enact layoff which would result in loss of essential daily local, regional, and state news and information including essential local/community health, public safety and emergency information--information not otherwise readily available throughout the state, particularly in rural Alaska.

Stations are already maximizing local and listener support through membership revenue. Local support is strong, but it cannot carry another round of state cuts. Further cutting funding for public broadcasting will have a domino effect locally, regionally, and statewide as stations are forced to layoff staff. This, in turn, will jeopardize federal operating grants which require a minimum number of employees. Thus federal matching dollars coming into Alaska will be reduced.

It is a tough fiscal climate in the state, but eliminating public services like public broadcasting will further jeopardize the welfare of our great state. I urge you to please keep public broadcasting alive.

Regards,

Gretchen Clarke  
Sitka, Alaska

--

Gretchen S. Clarke, MPH  
[gretchensclarke@gmail.com](mailto:gretchensclarke@gmail.com)

**From:** [Josh Pittsenbarger](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Rural Radio  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 12:54:19 PM

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To whom it my concern,

I am a resident of Galena, Alaska. I am writing you to let you know how important public radio is to our community. We in Galena lesson to games while our students are travelling to other villages. We also use the wireless as a network to put out information to the entire community of upcoming events, etc. We are also aware that there is a financial crisis in Alaska, but not funding a critical component of the “quality of life” that we enjoy in rural Alaska would be very unfortunate. I am hoping that the zero funding for public radio is not considered, please reconsider. Instead let’s look at how the government agencies can save internally that won’t hurt the consituants. Thanks for your attention.

Joshua Pittsenbarger, M. Ed.

Galena Interior Learning Academy

PO Box 359

Galena, AK 99741

907-656-2053 ext. 116

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**From:** [Tom Moran](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON FY2017 OPERATING BUDGET  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 11:09:00 AM

---

Greetings:

Please let this e-mail serve as written testimony in support of Governor Walker's proposed budget. Governor Walker has been faced with a very unique challenge that I do not envy one bit. Our state's economy, predicated on the oil industry, is on the brink of collapse. While some of our citizenry urges us to "Cut the fat!," we all know that there isn't anything to cut. Alaska is entitled to the same level of government services that the rest of the country receives. The economies of our continental brethren, however, have not been based wholly on what appears to be a dying industry. Just like the next Alaskan, I hope for a return to the days of \$100+ per barrel...but I'm not holding my breath. And even if oil prices suddenly do soar, the fact will remain that our economy is a one-trick pony. It's time to diversify our interests and protect our infrastructure. Many people in the lower 48 call Alaska a "Libertarian state," but I believe that perception has been colored, in large part, by the fact that we do not adequately tax our citizenry, while literally paying them for their citizenship. I am not advocating for a tax-and-spend government; rather, I am advocating for our government, with whichever party is in the leadership, to see the writing on the wall and change with the times. My sentiment is that it's time to turn the page on the old way of doing things. Please count this testimony as a ringing endorsement for a budget that increases revenues rather than decreases expenditures.

Most sincerely,

**Thomas C. Moran**

**City Manager**

102 Division Street

P.O. Box 281

Nome, Alaska 99762

P: 907.443.6600

F: 907.443.5349

*"Do more than is required of you." - General George S. Patton, Jr.*



**From:** [Roy Lang](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 10:28:31 AM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Roy Lang  
3400 W Phenix Ave  
Wasilla, AK 99623

**From:** [Karen Ruchti](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Input on public radio  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 10:14:12 AM

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Dear Sir,

Please reconsider the funding for **public radio**. KIYU is our local radio station and provides the towns announcements, classifieds, job listings, meeting notices, school information; community events (like baby showers, library information) Search and Rescue information, Lost and Found section, and the Galena school bus schedule and lunch menus. This was the go to site when I considered moving up here to teach. The service they provide is excellent. This is like the heartbeat of the community. If we had to get all the above information from Fairbanks it would not related to our situation here in Galena.

I have enclosed a link so you can see firsthand the important information they provide, not only over the radio but online also. Please take the time to look at their website and see the importance of it.

<http://kiyu.com/wireless.html>

I cannot address the public TV or the Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission as I'm not able to retrieve TV stations.

Thank you for reading my email.

I hope that you will reconsider the funding for them. Thanks for reading.

**Karen Ruchti**

**From:** [Brady Horne](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 9:57:53 AM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million. If you are not capable of performing this request then I think you may be in the wrong profession, and on the wrong committee.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Brady Horne  
30984 Echo Lake Rd  
Soldotna, AK 99669

**From:** [mark and mardell](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** public broadcasting funding  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 9:30:38 AM

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To Whom it May Concern:

I understand that you are tasked with the difficult task of making less money go further in our state. I feel strongly that cutting public broadcasting deeply is not a prudent thing to do.

Our public radio is a vital service to us and It is the glue that holds the many parts of our small community together. Having immediate local news and information allows us to know what is going on, whether it be emergency info, weather, events, etc. This local component is what will be cut with drastic funding cuts by cutting staff and news. The entertainment part of radio is less expensive but that is not the vital part of small town radio. The entertainment factor can be found many places on the internet today,. BUT that is not what public radio in a small community's all about. It is a local service for information. There will be great impacts if that service is not here.

Mardell Gunn  
Haines,AK

**From:** [Myrna McGhie](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 9:23:31 AM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Myrna McGhie  
5 Trinidad Dr  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

**From:** [Scott Olson](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 8:39:23 AM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Scott Olson  
Vandevere Dr  
Kenai, AK 99611

**From:** [Ruth](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 5:07:31 AM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Ruth  
3100 E Naomi Ave  
Wasilla, AK 99654

**From:** [Richard Eastman](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 2:17:11 AM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Richard Eastman

Palmer, AK 99645



**From:** [kipha.valvoda](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Thursday, February 25, 2016 12:17:11 AM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
kipha valvoda

Wrangell, AK

**From:** [Robert Halverson](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 11:39:27 PM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like. we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Robert Halverson  
1371 Hillcrest Dr  
Anchorage, AK 99503

**From:** [Bill Walker](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 9:42:40 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

Do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget. Freeze new PFD applications and pay only people who got PFD last year this next year!!! Marijuana taxes haven't even been mentioned in Walker plan and will become a slush fund for "general" funding, so account for this millions of dollars in taxes on the horizon. LNG pipeline, using tax payer dollars, give the tax payers the royalties!

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

No more free lunches, meetings are from now on brown bag, not held at the Petroleum Club, or catered viewed on T.V. by starving hungry Alaskans. Anchorage has taken away food stamps for people 18-49 who do not have children. Brother Francis "Beans Café" also has been closed for a week. Anchorage is starving. The PFD is the Only money some people have to live on for the YEAR!!! THEY know how to budget, and eat out of garbage cans. Maybe Walker should try that! GCI wants our PFD, Boycott GCI. The Native Share holders can vote and so can the rest of Alaska. Impeach Walker, I didn't vote for loosing my PFD!!!

Thank you,  
Bill Walker  
700 Muldoon Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99504

**From:** [Jeffrey Cox](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 9:09:11 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Jeffrey Cox  
8025 Country Woods Dr  
Anchorage, AK 99502

**From:** [Bruce Messerschmidt](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 8:44:41 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Bruce Messerschmidt  
17090 Glacier Hwy  
Juneau, AK 99801

**From:** [Kitty Hiler](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 8:33:56 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Kitty Hiler  
8020 Medellin Cir  
Anchorage, AK 99507

**From:** [Nikki Vannoy](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 8:22:42 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Nikki Vannoy  
18002 W Bryant Rd  
Wasilla, AK 99654

**From:** [Bonnie Harling](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 7:42:15 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Bonnie Harling  
1205 Yunana Ct  
Fairbanks, AK 99701



**From:** [Erica Campbell](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 6:55:09 PM

---

Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Erica Campbell  
411 Birch St  
Kenai, AK 99611

**From:** [Shari Neth](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** PBS funding  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 5:11:19 PM

---

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

I live in Bethel. I'm greatly concerned about the 100% proposed cut to public broadcasting.

My husband and I do not have cable. For folks like us, public broadcasting is our only source of local, statewide, national, and international news; and our only source for quality programming.

Furthermore, if such a cut were to be approved, all federal matching funds for Alaska's public broadcasting would be lost as well.

I understand that Alaska is having a fiscal crisis, but I ask that we not lose public broadcasting because of it.

Thank you for your consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

Sharon Neth

P.O. Box 1872

Bethel, AK 99559

**From:** [Jennie Hafele](#)  
**Subject:** Comments-Budget/UA/PFD  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 5:00:20 PM

---

To:  
SFIN  
HFIN  
FIN Subcommittee Members-UA  
SSTA  
Interior Delegation

From:  
Deirdre Helfferich  
House District 4  
Subject:  
Constituent Comments, UA Funding and PFD Use

Please enter the email below into the record for  
HB 256  
SB 114 and HB 303  
SB 128 and HB 245  
HB 224

Dated 2/24/2016

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**From:** Deirdre Helfferich <[estereditor@gmail.com](mailto:estereditor@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 4:12 PM  
**To:** LIO Fairbanks  
**Subject:** Re: Rep. Tammie Wilson's suggestion to cut research and outreach funding to UA

Dear Senator Coghill,

You may not be aware of it, but the Ester area is full of small farms, more every year, and agriculture has been taking off. Our proximity to the university (and the fact that many people in Ester work in College or on campus) make it tempting for many to turn that large garden into a small farm, or to sell the extra vegetables or flowers on the side at our tiny market. And right on campus are experts who can, or until recently could, help them choose seeds and sources and tools and fertilizer and all the other things needed to get a successful start, even to learning the business of farming, budgeting, etc. Alaska's soils, as you know, are cold, and even Canadian breeds or breeds adapted for Palmer don't cut it in the Tanana Valley, due to

the shorter days and fewer of them.

But that is going away. Faculty are having to retire or are being laid off, and the experimentation that this university was founded on (in 1906) and that the surrounding farmers depend on for information are ceasing (just when the clamor for more local food production is higher than ever before). Once the state stops funding research, of course, the land-grant matches from the federal government will cease, our land grant will be in peril, and our university as well. Having about two-thirds of the match funding chopped is a pretty significant cut. This amount is ~\$1,851,000.

I am perfectly willing to have a smaller Permanent Fund Dividend to support the university. My husband and I have been contemplating smallholding as farmers in the Ester area. While we don't make much, we own our home free and clear, along with our car. But I have seen what happens before when the price of oil drops and the legislature didn't have the Permanent Fund: huge swathes of the population left Alaska, followed by an economic crash. Then, the university was an enormous economic driver in the Fairbanks area. Please protect it.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Helfferich  
3717 Quartz Road  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907-479-3368

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**From:** [Aven Leidigh](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 4:58:00 PM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

I am writing you today because I am concerned about our state deficit.

Right now it looks like we will be running a deficit of \$3.5 billion for the second year in a row.

But please do not raise my taxes in order to fix this problem. Instead, we should cut our state operating budget by at least \$500 million.

I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Aven Leidigh  
841 W 73rd Ave  
Anchorage, AK 99518

**From:** [Jeff McDonald](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 4:46:19 PM

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Dear House Finance Committee General,

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I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Jeff McDonald

Juneau, AK 99803

**From:** [Mary Zackar](#)  
**To:** [House Finance](#)  
**Subject:** Cut the State Operating Budget!  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 24, 2016 4:43:56 PM

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I am asking you today to please cut the state operating budget!

Thank you,  
Mary Zackar  
3875 Geist Rd  
Fairbanks, AK 99709