

**From:** [Jessica Larsen](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** testimony in support of UA funds  
**Date:** Sunday, March 06, 2016 11:25:13 AM

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Dear Committee,

For public testimony:

I am a professor at UAF, I have been with UAF for almost 19 years, and I study active volcanoes in Alaska, of which we have 52. Alaska has more active volcanoes by far than any other state in the US. Alaska sees an eruption on average 1 to 3 times per year. Our volcanoes pose threats to people living in the Anchorage and Kenai Peninsula region, as well as in the highly lucrative Dutch Harbor/Unalaska and Akutan fishing communities. They also directly threaten the ~50,000 people per day flying in commercial jets on routes traversing from North America to Asia, estimated by the USGS and ICAO. My research benefits the state of Alaska by seeking to understand what happens within our volcanoes that cause their widely ranging eruption styles; primarily the explosive eruptions that pose hazards to people.

The US Geological Survey sponsored AVO supports only a small fraction of my yearly salary (16%). By cost sharing between federal (USGS and NSF) and UA resources, my colleagues and I have built and maintained an internationally recognized research program in volcanology at the UAF.

It is *illegal* for us to write grant proposals while supported on federal money. *I cannot legally write a grant proposal while supported by federal grant money.* Loss of state research money will mean I cannot seek the additional grant money that helps fuel the UA research engine, and helps make UAF an internationally recognized US institution for volcano research.

I have a joint teaching appointment at UAF. I transform my research activities directly into learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. I teach part of the GEOS 120 course (Earthquakes, Glaciers, and Volcanoes) for non-majors, AA degree seekers, and a whole host of non-traditional as well as traditional college students. I also teach undergraduate and graduate courses in volcanology and an online course in geological hazards. Students enrolled in the hazards course come from a variety of majors, from Geosciences and Education to Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Even though I teach at UAF, my online hazards course (GEOS 380) enrolls students from all campuses in the UA system. I love teaching UA students at all levels and I am continually

excited to share my new research insights to make my courses, fresh, lively, and cutting edge. Without my direct and continuous involvement in research, those courses would just be empty shells of what they are and I would not be able to directly use my research to benefit Alaska's wonderful student body.

I have fully supported and successfully trained 11 graduate students (MS and PhD recipients) in my 18.5 years here. They have all gone on to lead successful careers in the geosciences and help uphold the prestige of UAF in the international volcanology community.

The diversity of funds I receive from federal and state sources enable me to participate in Alaska Volcano Observatory monitoring and research activities and transform my research into excellent learning opportunities for Alaska's college students. The research funds UA receives from the state of Alaska are critical in how well this system functions. I am just one example of the many excellent faculty who share a similar situation, and who transform their research into many benefits to the state.

Although I am employed by UA, I am writing to you as a constituent in this letter and all views are my own. I wrote this on a Sunday, at home, on my own time, using my personal email address.

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