

From: [Frank Soos](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: budget
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Dear Finance Committee Members:

Thank you for asking for input on the budget.

We must raise revenue.

The cuts proposed by Governor Walker alone will put a tremendous strain on education from preschool to grad. school. We may have to take cuts at that level. But be sure, they are damaging. They have already been damaging. When these cuts come along, both the physical elements of schools and the personnel suffer. If you were to walk through any of our campuses right now, the physical plants still look pretty good. But buildings need regular maintenance and we have unfinished buildings that have no use whatsoever until they are finished. In 1986, the last time the price of oil tanked, the campus here in Fairbanks began to look like an urban bus station before the drain was reversed and buildings were repaired. Now, this particular campus probably has double the square footage of research and classroom space it had in 1986. Of these new buildings, the new science buildings are state of the art. And because of that, the need for maintenance of these buildings is going to be greater.

What you cannot see easily as you walk through the campuses is the number of faculty and staff positions that have gone unfilled, the number real full time jobs that have been eliminated in favor of part-time jobs. When this sort of shrinkage happens, it damages the faculty and the student body both. As people retire, younger faculty bring new life to a school. This need for fresh faces is equally imperative at the public school level as well. We are losing programs and we will lose students soon after.

At this point, we need to recognize that oil prices will not rebound to \$100-plus per barrel levels any time soon. They probably never will. Waiting for oil to rebound gets us nowhere. It also puts the state in a weak bargaining position with the oil companies. If we generate our own revenue base, we actually strengthen our ability to bargain with the oil companies. We are less at their mercy.

The governor's plan for income taxes, PFD reduction, a sales tax is a good place to start. I cannot understand why raising revenue has not been at the top of the agenda for you all. We have cut all we can. We have cut the things that make a state a good place to live. We must raise our own revenue to sustain the things we value.

Frank Soos
Fairbanks