

From: [Liz Senear](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Re: HB72 Testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 3:10:08 PM

To members of the Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Elizabeth Senear and I have been a resident of Cordova since 1988. I understand that we have hard choices ahead of us due to the decrease in oil revenues. However I feel that the large cuts proposed to the Alaska Marine Highway are the wrong thing to do, both for the communities whose only road ties with the rest of Alaska are through the Marine Highway, and for the state as a whole. Over the last 25 years I have seen ferry service to our community increase, particularly with the advent of the F/V Chenega in the fleet. The F/V Chenega is runs virtually full from May through September. This has resulted in clear economic benefits to both the community of Cordova and to other Alaska communities which are linked economically to Cordova. As many have testified before me the marine highway is our road on which our community is heavily dependent. The current level of ferry service has resulted in an increase in tourism revenue to Cordova, better options for shipping fish to processors and markets, and better shipping options for bringing goods into Cordova, all of which have large economic benefits to us. It has also provided more cost effective access to medical care not available in Cordova to residents. I personally have greatly increased the amount of supplies I purchase in Anchorage rather than order online from outside suppliers, and have about tripled the number of days I spend in Anchorage in a year, because of being able to get to Anchorage in a cost effective and timely manner with my car, which I can load up with goods purchased in Anchorage to bring back to Cordova.

In addition, I am opposed to the proposed 100% cut to public broadcasting in Alaska. I am on the KCHU board (public radio) and know that the loss of these monies and the resultant loss of federal matching funds, will cripple our public radio station. As has been testified, we reach many people who live "off the grid" and don't have reliable access to public information services. This gives access to statewide news and local news that may not exist otherwise, and links far flung communities. I believe this cut will lead to the loss of public radio stations in many of the smaller communities and once they are gone, it will be difficult to bring them back in the future.

I find it interesting that the proposed cuts would leave Cordova with decreased ferry service, no LIO office, no public TV (Ratnet is the only free TV in Cordova), and probably no public radio station. For me, that translates to severely limiting our ability to participate in the legislative process in Alaska. I have to say that the Cordova LIO office has been instrumental in keeping Cordova citizens informed about the legislature and state issues.

While it may be hard to understand why rural communities require support for services that urban communities don't, keep in mind that a large portion of the economy in urban Alaska is dependent on the resources extracted and tourism trade in the rural communities, where the cost of living is high and the economy of scale is poor for many things. Large cuts in things very important to rural communities will definitely affect the economy as a whole, not just in rural Alaska.

As I have heard others say, I urge you to be more circumspect in your budget cuts this year, as no amount of cutting will bring us any closer to a balanced budget, and then to seriously move forward with a long term plan to increase state revenues through other means. I personally favor a state income tax as the easiest to administer and, I believe, the fairest.

Thank you,

Elizabeth Senear
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