

Cynthia Lagoudakis, Petersburg

Mar. 8, 2016

Comments to the Senate Finance Committee
RE: SB 139

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the formulation of the State's budget. These are most challenging times, and I appreciate the time and effort taken in considering all the complexities this daunting task entails.

As a member of Alaska Municipal League's Sustainability Committee, the most important message to impart is that we understand as Alaskans that we are in this together, and expect the legislature will adopt the same spirit as you move forward. Pet projects, special bonuses, favored locations and desired perks have to go by the wayside. Americans have persevered through rationed food and rationed gasoline before. We know how to live with tough choices, banking on a brighter future. Let's not be afraid to consider the very hard decisions now, and be willing to make conscious trade-offs for desired short-term outcomes that strengthen our long-range outlook.

Many communities around the state will ask what you can do for them without also providing an understanding of the efforts they have taken to brace for a leaner future. As Vice-Mayor for my community, I have been a part of municipal efforts to channel funding into deferred maintenance, seeking to self-fund as much of our operations as possible. We have held the line on hiring new positions, promoting from within. We have cut hours of operation for some functions. We have utilized our own funding to address facility condition issues in recognition that capital improvement funding is not likely to be forthcoming. This includes funding for a desperately needed police station remodel to keep the building from falling in on itself, and to meet federal and state requirements, improve utility efficiency, and make necessary technology upgrades to keep our phones and computers functioning and to better serve the public.

We have done our best to piggy back municipal projects onto state projects to save mobilization costs. We have sought Federal funding, where possible, to improve harbor conditions and maintain facilities for the fishing sector that is the largest part of our local economy. Despite increasing school enrollment, we have not increased positions within the school and have even replaced our retired Superintendent from within.

Our community, which enjoys a fair amount of amenities for a small population, engages in aggressive fund-raising, volunteer labor and local taxation in the form of a sales tax and transient room taxes to support these amenities, including a non-profit museum, a non-profit children's center, public radio, Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, domestic violence response organization, non-profit mental health organization, medical center foundation, community foundation, meal program for seniors, Friends of the Library group, multiple sports organizations for youth and adults and more. We have, and continue to look at ways of combining organization efforts for efficiencies and cost-savings.

Today I am asking that you consider some of these suggestions for the development of the State budget, in that same spirit of efficiency and cooperation. I will start with suggestions for items to be cut from the budget:

Alaska LNG Project - the difficulties with this project have been evident for some time. While a laudable long-term goal in theory, for the present, this project should be put on hold. The success of this project seems highly speculative, is very expensive, and comes with some

environmental challenges that require a singular focus to achieve. The timing simply isn't right. Putting this project on hold should not jeopardize reviving it in the future.

New Anchorage LIO - This just does not pass the "red face" test with the public, and we cannot afford it. The Department of Revenue financial analysis does not support the continued use of this facility over use of the Atwood Building.

Performance Bonuses - I am certain many state employees will more than earn their pay and deserve bonuses over the next few budget cycles. However, this is not the time to be issuing bonuses while others are losing jobs due to lack of funding. There are \$6 million in bonuses spelled out in this budget that need to be eliminated for the present budget cycle. In addition, all performance bonuses should be suspended in the short-term, whether or not identified by line item. This doesn't mean the people of Alaska don't value the work and commitment of state employees, only that bonuses are a luxury we cannot currently afford.

ADOT & PF Projects - There are a number of high-visibility, high controversy projects proposed around the State of questionable benefit, and are incurring a drain on staff time and funding by continuing to attempt to promote them. These projects include the Knik Arm Bridge, the Juneau Access Road and the Kake-Petersburg Road among others.

In the case of the Juneau Access Road, it does not even provide direct access to the community, and will be reliant on declining road maintenance funding and a ferry system that has been challenging to use at best. If built, Juneau is woefully unprepared financially and otherwise to deal with increased traffic, parking needs, water and sanitation demands, impacts to law enforcement and emergency response at a time when anticipated state job losses are going to challenge Juneau's fiscal ability to deal with such demands. Any further funds spent on this project are money down the drain with no appreciable benefit.

Similarly, the Kake-Petersburg Road is a project in search of a purpose. The project was finally determined by ADOT's hired consultants to not to meet the purpose and need for the project after years of analysis, extensive resident input and significant expenditures. . .and even after employing McDowell telephone surveys that were not much more than push polls (as an elected official I have received a number of complaints regarding this). It is not only controversial and unwanted, but the construction is unfunded, as well. Yet, instead of putting this \$40 million project to bed, ADOT is trying to re-invent it. It will provide no benefit. We cannot afford it. Though the original intent was to bring some economic opportunity to our area, these are funds that could be used to higher purpose elsewhere. As the popular song advises, "Let it go. . . "

The Knik Arm Bridge is not a necessary investment and does not pass any reasonable cost-benefit analysis. There is credible information to show the costs of the project have been significantly underestimated. At this critical time we need to focus on existing infrastructure and health and safety over new, divisive and questionable projects that don't have a clear, identified future payoff. Getting to work faster is not enough of a reason to build a project of this magnitude.

The Alaska Marine Highway system has proven benefit to communities throughout the coastal areas, and has been shown to have an economic reach even in Anchorage despite it not being a

ferry destination. Shift some of the proposed wasteful mega-project funds into finally maintaining and improving service and infrastructure for an existing and critical transportation system that serves thousands of miles of coastal Alaska and the numerous communities, commerce, and the residents located there.

State transportation funding needs to be more predictable, and support ALL modes of transportation, not just roads. Future likelihood of state funding for maintenance also needs to play a bigger part in determining whether or not a project moves forward. Shifting costs to local governments is not the solution to transportation funding challenges, especially as we anticipate both significant cuts in State contributions and additional burdens being passed along by the State.

Areas of funding that need to be strengthened:

Alaska Marine Highway System - the State has mismanaged this system and missed revenue opportunities for years. No, it will not be a self-funded system, but neither are our roads. A number of analyses have shown the ferry system to have benefit to Alaskans beyond the coastal communities. Can we stop debating the value of a necessary and unique transportation link and finally start managing it according to the State's mandate to provide transportation services across Alaska? As the State looks at divestiture of airports around Alaska, barge costs spike and Essential Air Service funding faces threats, small communities have grave concerns about our ability to move residents, visitors, construction equipment and supplies, business operations and students between communities and opportunities. This is an economic and quality of life issue that needs your serious attention.

Municipal Revenue Sharing - While the State promotes maximum self-governance at the local level, communities are necessarily dependent on municipal revenue sharing to provide citizens with basic services. As I mentioned at the outset, our community works to spend our funding responsibly. We have continued to strive to keep budgets reasonably lean without creating unacceptable impacts to service delivery. Our auditors have commented that Petersburg is better positioned than many Alaskan communities, and has obviously looked to the future in designing and implementing fiscal policy. Some reliability in revenue sharing helps us weather the tough times, and is necessary to keep and attract residents to our communities.

PERS/TRS Unfunded Liability - Problems with the State's accounting and inaccurate information provided to municipalities has helped create this liability. Though we recognize that we will have a hand in solving the problem, the State needs to be prudent in not shifting an unreasonable amount of the burden to local government, especially in view of the other impacts of cost shifting and program reduction or elimination.

Public Broadcasting - I was encouraged today to listen to the House Finance Committee discuss HB 256, on Gavel to Gavel as it so happens. Despite Rail Belt cynicism that this public service is unnecessary, I have lived in communities both large and small in Alaska, from Anchorage to Yakutat. Public broadcasting is an important component of life in all those locations. I was encouraged that today the House committee passed Amendment 11 to HB 256 reinstating funding for public broadcasting. Even so, this doesn't represent extravagance. Our local station KFSK notes that on average, the funding for public broadcasting has remained

Cynthia Lagoudakis, Petersburg

Mar. 8, 2016

essentially flat since 1999. Our local station has ramped up their fundraising in the past couple years in response to budget challenges, which has been somewhat controversial among other local non-profits. We recognize we have a small pool to dip into, and support for non-profits is not bottomless. Nevertheless, KFSK enjoys a good reputation and utilizes extensive volunteer help to stretch dollars, provides local, regional and statewide connections, local and marine weather for mariners and others, and serves as our emergency broadcast system for everything from terror threats to tsunamis. It broadcasts school board and assembly meetings, as well.

Health and Social Services - Though a large portion of the budget, do be aware that there are already some unintended impacts to budget reductions. I recently ran into an itinerant youth parole officer, whose position requires visiting the small communities of southern Southeast Alaska to engage in youth intervention and program management. I was surprised to learn her position was in HSS rather than the Dept. of Corrections. When HSS eliminated travel, they essentially and unintentionally eliminated her ability to do her job. Thankfully it got sorted out but is an example of unintended effects.

I believe that a combination of new taxes, exclusive of a state sales tax, and caps to the Permanent Fund Dividend will be among the necessary steps to balance the State's budget. As you work through the options available to you, I ask that you be creative, honest, non-partisan, cautious and realistic in crafting solutions. I am particularly concerned that choices made now will drive Alaska toward a recession. Please keep in mind the cumulative and unintended consequences to municipalities of any decisions that you make.

Thank you for your commitment to Alaska and the dedication to her service at this most challenging time.

Cindi Lagoudakis
Petersburg, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Bob Shavelson <bob@inletkeeper.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:41 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Operating Budget Comments

Dear Members of the Senate Finance Committee -

Cook Inletkeeper is a public interest organization dedicated to protecting wild salmon and water quality throughout the Cook Inlet watershed. Please accept these brief comments on behalf of Inletkeeper and its 1200 members and supporters throughout southcentral Alaska on the State Operating Budget.

Alaska's failure to diversify its economy is now playing out in the fiscal crisis before us, and it's clear we must look at all possible options to raise revenues and cut expenses. We all must sacrifice if we hope to maintain the basic services Alaskan's deserve while protecting the corpus of the Permanent Fund.

One of the largest expenditures to the state is oil and gas tax credits. In Cook Inlet, with low or no production taxes, corporate taxes and royalties do not come close to erasing the massive tax credits the industry enjoys. In this time of fiscal crisis, it only makes sense to reduce these subsidies and to allow the free market to operate freely.

At the same time, mining taxes have not been changed for decades, and the mining industry too should pay its fair share.

I know the sentiments expressed above are an active part of the discussions in Juneau, but as you consider further cuts to the agencies that protect our invaluable fish and game resources, I hope you will hear the many voices calling for a level playing field with our corporate partners.

Thank you,

Bob Shavelson

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Love Cook Inlet? Make an extra gift to [Cook Inletkeeper](#) when you PICK.CLICK.GIVE. Or donate online. Together we can protect Alaska's Cook Inlet watershed.

Doniece Gott

From: Beverly Mulcahy <bevalaska@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:43 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Budget Comments

I am a born and raised Alaskan and have lived here all my life - more than 60 years. I support using new revenue and the PFD to help with the fiscal challenges. I also support a sunset clause on an income tax and sales tax once the State maintains a sustainable budget. I support trimming the current budget through pay decreases to state employees earning more than \$100,000 per year. I also support decreases to the legislators, their staff, and especially their per diem and travel allotments.

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Lynn Spence <lspence@jaybrant.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:37 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

Dear Senators,

It is my belief that we need an income tax. I am a working person and plan to work at least 7 years at my full time job. My husband who is 69 years old is also still working full time. We have lived in Alaska for 35 years and we have enjoyed the improved public services provided through the State and Federal government. Since we live in a small enough community to also see the hardship many families endure due to economic issues, lack of health care, and lack of supervision for their children while they work, we believe social services, basic health care and child care subsidized by gov't programs make our community better and safer for all of us. I don't think you can cut enough out of the current budget without seriously impacting the quality of life for all of us. Please do not balance the budget on the backs of the poor, mentally ill or disabled. Please take serious action like instituting an income tax. For those of us who have good jobs, the system is working and I believe an income tax is appropriate. This is not a new idea. You only have to look at the other states to see that income tax is one successful way to increase revenue for the State to provide for the greater good of the people.

Thank you.

Lynn Spence

Homer, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Susan McHenry <simchenry@alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:23 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Multi-faceted approach to budget crisis

Thank you for your service to the citizens of Alaska during this time of very difficult decision-making. As a 50 year resident and a UAF graduate and former employee, I urge you to turn away from the plan of severe, devastating cuts to the institution that builds our work force and informed citizenry and to other state agencies that provide essential services. We can NOT cut our way out of this extreme budget dilemma.

Please pursue the plan to institute an income tax and a school tax so non-residents can contribute to our revenue stream. I am in favor of capping the PFD and restructuring how the savings account is used to provide a long term plan to fund our operations. Adjustments to gas and oil tax credits are also appropriate.

Please do not cripple the state school system and our health and human services operations with additional severe cuts.

I remember reading JFK's Profiles in Courage during high school and I feel that source of inspiration could be helpful to all of you who have to make these wrenching decisions now. Thank you.

Sue McHenry
3200 Edby Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Beth Cherry <bcherry@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:13 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Operating Budget Thoughts

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate Finance Committee –

I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my thoughts about the current budget. I appreciate your efforts at involving as many Alaskan as possible in the process. This is a huge challenge I acknowledge.

I am a resident of the Matanuska Susitna Borough and have been since 2003. I live in the 9th district and am represented in the House by Jim Clover and in the Senate by Mike Dunleavy. The priority for the state must be reducing the size and scope of government. We have grown a government the State of Alaska cannot afford nor do we need. By most accounts it's cost is close to \$6,000 for every man, woman, and child in the state. It is simply not sustainable. At this moment I am not convinced that the legislature or the governor have seriously addressed right-sizing the state government to meet the basic obligations of government. The recent news story about the "found money" does nothing to bolster my confidence in the legislature or the governor's office that either have the will, skills or the ability to manage the finances of the state.

From my seat in the house, the proposed budget "cuts" are a start, not an end point. The rush to new revenue sources and "restructure" the permanent fund needs to be considered ONLY after every other avenue has been exhausted. If I sound cynical when I observe the call for new revenues and tapping into the Permanent Fund is a careful and well-orchestrated plan by wealthy and well-heeled interests, I am! The prize has always been finding a conduit into the permanent fund. The Governors suggestion that that the state enter into an arbitrage arrangement as a revenue source makes me shudder. The plan to publically finance a gas pipeline is another example. As cynical as it may sound, I have little confidence in the governor's office and, my confidence in the representatives of the people is fast diminishing, that the Alaska can get its financial house in order and the permanent fund protected. I understand the pressure from lobbyists is strong and that cuts to the budget will be painful, but I encourage you and your colleagues to stand strong. Make the cuts and be honest. Be straight with Alaskans. It is going to hurt. There is no doubt about that. There is an adage that says "Bad news doesn't get any better with age" and the time for whistling past the graveyard has come and gone.

Alaska survived the oil price crash in the 80's through sheer determination and it can survive again if, and only if, there is a confidence AND a sense of shared sacrifice. Several plans have been offered, the one I most favor is the ISER plan. In order to make it work, there needs to be cuts to the operating budget and capital budget. Take those steps first. Then we can talk about the "new revenue" sources.

Get the budget down to at least \$4.5B –effectively to 2006 level- then look to the Earning Reserve to fill immediate budget gaps BEFORE engaging the feeding frenzy of "tax and loot". fund. I note that the Permanent

Fund is NOT state money but funds owned by the CITIZENS of the State of Alaska and held in TRUST by the state.

Respectively,

Bryan Cherry

Fishhook



**Alaska Center for
Resource Families**
790-4246
www.acrf.org

**Assoc. for the Education
of Young Children**
789-1235
www.aeyc-sea.org

AWARE
586-6623
www.awareak.org

Bartlett Beginnings
796-8424
www.bartletthospital.org

Coast Guard Work-Life
463-2125

Communities in Schools
364-3801
www.cisjuneau.org

**Juneau Family Health &
Birth Center**
586-1203
www.juneaubirthcenter.org

**Juneau Public Health
Center**
465-3353

Juneau Public Libraries
586-5249
www.juneau.org/library

Juneau School District
463-1700
www.juneauschools.org

Juneau Youth Services
789-7610, 789-4733
www.jys.org

**SERRC
Learning Connection**
586-5718
www.serrc.org

Office of Children's Services
465-1650
dhss.alaska.gov/ocs

REACH
586-8228
www.reachak.org

SEARHC
463-4040
www.searhc.org

Tlingit & Haida Head Start
586-1432
www.ccthita.org/services/family/headstart

United Way Southeast
463-5530
www.unitedwayseak.org

A Best Beginnings Partnership

March, 2016

Dear Honorable Policymakers,

I am writing in behalf of the Partnerships for Families and Children (PFC), a group of 20 non-profit and state agencies who work together to promote a seamless web of support for young children and their families in Juneau. We are committed to assuring that all families have access to resources to support their children. We recognize that we must all work together the support families with young children in our community. We are writing in support of House Concurrent resolution No. 21 introduced by Representative Tarr urging Governor Bill Walker to join with the Alaska State Legislative to respond to public and behavioral healthy epidemic of adverse childhood experiences (ACES) by establishing a statewide policy and providing programs to address this epidemic. We are also writing in support of Governor Walker's budget to provide funding of early learning programs including Best Beginnings, Infant Learning Programs, Imagination Library, Parents as Teachers, and the Pre K programs that help support young children and their families to mitigate some of the adverse childhood experiences.

There has been much national attention on ACES and awareness that Alaska leads the nation with individuals having 4 or more aces and 30 % of all Alaska Natives having experienced 4 or more ACES. We know this can lead to toxic stress and alarming poor health outcomes. We must continue the work in Alaska to address this public health crisis now. We must all work together to build a statewide network that connects state and local leaders and organizations to inform policy change at all levels. This includes but not limited education of all health care professionals, screening all children, improving access to healthcare including mental and behavioral health for all families, and providing the necessary resources to those children and families identified. The State of Washington has developed a state wide toolkit to address ACES at many levels.

We must invest in our most valuable resource- the children of Alaska. This includes supporting the Resolution No. 21 and the Governor's budget supporting early childhood programs including Best Beginnings, Imagination Library, Infant Learning Programs, Parents as Teachers, and the Pre K programs.

We urge you to adopt this resolution and invest in the future of Alaska by supporting the budget for early learning programs. The research is clear that this is the best public investment with lifelong returns.

Sincerely,

Beverly Ingram
Chair of the Medical and Behavioral Health Committee
Partnerships for Families and Children

Mission Statement: Partnerships for Families & Children works collaboratively to promote shared broad-based communication and support for young children and their families.

3100 Channel Drive, Suite 215 ♦ Juneau, Alaska 99801 ♦ www.juneaufamilies.org ♦ 907.789.1235 ♦ 888.785.1235

Doniece Gott

From: Liz Downing <eadowning@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:02 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Paul Seaton; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: FY 17 Operating Budget

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to ask you to include full funding of the Governor's proposed education budget including a \$50 increase to the Base Student Allocation. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District has made significant cuts to staffing at all levels as well as other operational funds over the last few years. The only place to cut now is in the classroom further reducing the options available to our students.

I remember education budget cuts 10-15 years ago and the impact they had. My son's kindergarten had 28 students (19 boys) and I saw family after family move Outside to Ohio, Vermont, and New York to improve opportunities for their children. Our current financial situation will already be creating flight from Alaska. Let's not add to it by chasing away our families who would otherwise be able to help us weather this storm.

I know you are facing difficult decisions and I trust you will take the long view by supporting those efforts, like education, that grow Alaska's future.

Thank you,

Liz Downing

Doniece Gott

From: Karen <kshemet@sproutalaska.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:58 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Early Childhood funding

Good Morning,

Please fund Early Childhood programs like Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, Imagination Library and Pre-K education and home visiting programs in general because the state of Alaska has major problems that can be addressed through providing a good start in life.

The return on this investment is huge and benefits the whole of society. University of Chicago economist James J. Heckman points to a 7-10 percent annual return on investment in high quality preschool.

Alaska needs more attention paid to one of our most vulnerable populations, young children, not less!!

Please do what you can to fund vital early childhood programs!!!!

Thanks for your attention and good work,

Karen Shemet

Sprout Family Visitor

3691 Ben Walters Lane #4

Homer, Alaska 99603

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Fax: 907-235-2644



Doniece Gott

From: Gareth Chesley <gareth.chesley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:31 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Comment on Proposed Cut to University of Alaska Funding

Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I have been following the ongoing budget process and have become deeply concerned over the proposed \$25 million cut to the University of Alaska's state funding.

UA has played a large role in my life. As I high school student I took classes at my local community campus in order to graduate early and get a head start on college. I attended the University of Alaska Fairbanks and earned Bachelors and Masters Degrees from that institution in addition to working as a teaching assistant during my graduate years. Currently, I am employed by the same University of Alaska Anchorage community college campus where I took my first college classes as a high school student. My primary role as a staff member is student and staff technology support and I also teach as a member of the adjunct faculty. To say that UA has had a profound effect on this lifelong, second generation Alaskan is an understatement.

My motivation for writing, however, does not stem from my own personal investment with the University. As a staff member of a community campus I have seen, time and time again, the first hand effect that we can have to change people's lives for the better. Most of these individuals do not have the same privileges, such as being able to move to pursue a multi-year education, which I had. For many, the community college is their only option to start a path toward a better education, a better job, or a better life.

I wholeheartedly support fiscal responsibility and understand the need for budget cuts. I personally chose to live a life where I have no debt of any kind (I worked hard to pay for and earn my college education, house, etc.) and I abhor the thought of our state spending beyond its means. I believe that the University must do its part in reducing the state budget. That being said, I think that magnitude of the current cut is short sighted in light of the role that the University plays across the state.

At a community campus many of our departments are comprised of a single individual. The lion's share of our budget is devoted to human resources and if we cut a staff member we stand to have an incredibly significant loss, like having no heat or light, having no computer support, having no student advising, having no testing center, having no learning center. Loss of any one of these services compromises our ability to help our Alaskan community. Failure to provide education and opportunity to the next generation of the Alaskan workforce will have a long term, deleterious effect on the economy of Alaska. After all, without oil revenue how are we supposed to rebuild our state without the opportunity to reeducate ourselves?

Gareth Chesley

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Anna MacKinnon
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:26 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: budget

Kristen Pratt
Legislative Aide
Office of Senator Anna MacKinnon
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol | Room 516
(907) 691-8911

From: Lance Roberts [mailto:roberts.lance@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:20 AM
Subject: budget

To Senate Finance:

I won't be able to make public testimony today, so I hope you'll consider these comments.

I'm happy about those sub-committee's that went further than the House in cutting the Governor's budget. I'm also disappointed in those sub-committee's that raised the amount. We desperately need to make substantial cuts this session, or there will be too much pressure on taxes and PFD cuts (the worst kind of taxes). It's been shown how devastating cutting the private economy to prop up the government economy will be on Alaska. We need to keep out of the mindset that government is somehow more enlightened to spend our money than we are.

One thing all sides agree on is that we need more economic diversity. Propping up a government that we let balloon will not give us anymore diversity, just more of the same onerous regulations and overreach. Diversity comes through the private sector and the free market, and to make that happen, private individuals need capital to invest and spend.

Please lead my making substantial cuts. The ISER/Goldsmith model, the only plan that doesn't involve new taxes or PFD cuts, is currently around \$4.3 B for a sustainable budget. I think the goal of \$4.5 B is probably sufficient to get to for this year. Please make it happen.

thanks,

Lance Roberts
Fairbanks
(speaking for myself)

Doniece Gott

From: Rick Hinkey <rhinkey@accessalaska.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:21 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Doug Toelle
Subject: Proposed Cuts

Finance Committee,

Thank you so much for all the hard work you do to ensure that Alaska is a viable place to live for those who are some of the most vulnerable. We know that given the fiscal situation FY 17 cuts could easily go deeper.

My name is Rick Hinkey and I have worked in the Human Services field for over 20 years, many of those serving vulnerable adults and those experiencing disabilities and at times cuts were necessary, or at the time it seemed that they were.

When economies flounder, the well-being of many social service recipients also flounders due to the increased stress of dealing with the fallout. In other words, cuts to social service programs tend to happen when the need for those services is often at its greatest. I know, because I was a social service recipient for most of my formative years. Any cutback had huge impact on every family in the community.

Cutting personal care assistance (PCA) services by 10% (\$9 million) could very well threaten the safety of many elder or disabled Alaskans. PCA services provide support for seniors and individuals with disabilities who need assistance with activities of daily living (such as eating, bathing, dressing, transferring, and toileting) as well as instrumental activities of daily living (including shopping, cooking, laundry, and light housework) to live in their own homes and communities. Vulnerable Alaskans who receive these services are also low-income and do not have the capacity to pay for the services needed to be able to remain in their own home or community. PCA services are provided through two different models that include “agency-based PCA” and “consumer-directed PCA.”

- PCA served more than 4,000 vulnerable Alaskans in FY15. The FY17 proposed reduction could reduce services for 447 individuals.
- PCA serves individuals in their home and community, where most people want to be, rather than a nursing home, which costs more.
- Federal Law requires that PCA services be provided for individuals whose needs meet a nursing home level of care.

Currently I serve this growing demographic through Access Alaska where our vision is to see every Alaskan have the opportunity to live as independently as possible in the community of their own choosing. Our senior population alone is growing faster than most places in the nation so any cut will be magnified by the growing need for PCA services.

Please support full funding for Personal Care Assistance in order to serve vulnerable Alaskans at home and in their communities.

Sincerely,

Rick Hinkey

MDiv, MNA

CDPCS Statewide Director



Opening Doors to Independence

526 Gaffney Rd. Suite 100

Fairbanks, AK 99701

907.479.7940 Fax: 907.474.4052

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Doniece Gott

From: Richard Laura Inglima <inglimadl@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:21 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: BUDGET HEARINGS

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

Between the two of us, we include a lifetime Alaskan and a 42 year resident of Alaska. We were in Alaska before construction of the Alaska Pipeline and long before the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend. We've been here to witness profligate spending as if it would never end and the years of handing over most of the reigns and benefits of OUR OIL resources to the Oil Companies that conveniently forget that it is Alaskan's oil.

In an article concerning Louisiana, we find similarities to Alaska's assumptions regarding fossil fuels and a hope we can learn from Louisiana's mistakes.

"Declining oil prices have forced Alaska to cut \$1 billion in spending from its budget over the last two years. Now it faces a \$4 billion deficit.

Instead of just relying on a short-term, unreliable, and polluting industry, states such as Louisiana [and Alaska] need to diversify into industries that draw on human capital — whether it's computer programming or solar panel manufacturing — and can provide a more stable source of revenue. Microchip prices don't fluctuate wildly. And the high-tech sector doesn't just fall apart when demand slackens for current products; companies innovate new ones. Louisiana can't innovate its way out of its current problem by inventing a new fossil fuel that just happens to be under its feet.

Perhaps, instead of cutting taxes and education spending, [Louisiana] should have invested in a more educated workforce." - Ben Adler, Grist

While the ideas of computer programming or solar panel manufacturing may not be realistic industries for Alaska, we are certain there are other industries and renewable resources that can be tapped for Alaska's benefit.

We believe the primary answers to addressing Alaska's budget shortfall are instituting an income tax and capping the Permanent Fund Dividend. We do not want to take these steps, any more than anyone else does. But we see the two ideas working in tandem for residents: retaining the Permanent Fund Dividend at a level that should provide most families the ability to cover the amount of income tax, allowing Alaskans to remain unscathed by the tax. However, this would provide income to Alaska by non-resident workers who benefit by working in the state and have so far, given nothing in return for this privilege. We also would like to see the reintroduction of an Education Tax. Back in the day, we Alaskans paid a very modest \$20 tax per person to benefit education funding (serving to invest in "a more educated workforce"). We suggest that, considering inflation, a currently modest amount of \$50 per person Education Tax be re-instituted.

Respectfully,

Richard & Laura Inglima
60210 Bear Creek Dr
Homer, AK 99603

Doniece Gott

From: Josiah Holbrook <josiah.holbrook@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Josiah Holbrook budget testimony

Hello,

My name is Josiah Holbrook. I'm a hard working Alaskan and my wife and I live in Delta Junction with our two children. Regarding the state budget problem, the proposal to ad tax and cut and cap the PFD would be a huge burden on my family. I work hard to provide for my family and make a living. I know I speak for countless Alaskan's like myself when I say this: The programs and projects that must be cut in order to maintain the state budget, are going to be a much smaller sacrifice than the burden of a state tax and (or) capping the PFD. I and countless other Alaskans urge the Senate and House to be aggressive in cutting spending so that the state budget can be met without burdening us hard working Alaskans. We love this great state but it can be a challenge to make a living. Don't make it harder with a state tax or changes to the PFD.

Thank you

Josiah Holbrook
josiah.holbrook@gmail.com
(907)803-9424

Doniece Gott

From: Tully LaBelle-Hamer <blabellehamer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:05 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: AK State Operating Budget

To the members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am a voter from Anchorage, and I understand the tough position that you are currently in as we face the budget deficit. I urge you to seek a comprehensive, long term plan that rises above party politics and creates solutions for Alaska's future.

I believe this plan includes new taxes, restructuring of the dividend, and surgical cuts to current programs.

While crafting the budget, please keep in mind that the lowest income citizens of our state may likely be hit hardest by potential solutions.

Please protect education and the future of our state. This includes the UA system and K-12 education in urban as well as rural areas. Alaska educators face a host of problems unique to the state, and to ensure a great future for ALL Alaskans they need your support.

Please do not get caught up in hard line party politics instead reach out and work together with other members of the senate. We are all Alaskans. We pride ourselves on being rugged, independent minded and solution driven. We need leaders who set a good example of creating workable solutions during tough economic times. We elected you to lead us and help us direct our great state. Please come through for us and lead Alaska toward a great future for this great state.

Sincerely,

Brendan Tully LaBelle-Hamer
Anchorage, AK

Doniece Gott

From: neil waggoner <akneil@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:03 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: State Budget

Dear Alaska Senate Finance Committee,

As you know Alaska is at a crossroads and faces a dire fiscal situation. As a 35 year old lifelong Alaskan who intends to stay here for the rest of my life, this is very concerning to me.

The time is now to set our state up for success in the future. Further cuts to education funding will lead to a less educated population, which will put us behind in the new technology driven world. Your decisions will directly impact the future lifestyle of my generation and the future generations.

According to documents from Representative Neumann, after budget cuts last session we are back to state spending levels of 1977 when adjusted for inflation. We cannot cut further without putting our state into a deep recession. Per a recent ISER report, each \$100 Million cut from the operating budget will result in the loss of 1,600 jobs. Some in the Legislature are calling for further cuts of \$500-\$700 Million, which could result in over 10,000 job losses.

- Please work to develop a sustainable budget for the sake of Alaska's children THIS session.
- I support plans for obtaining new sources of revenue, including income taxes, reducing the PFD, and a variety of other taxes.
- I support a broad-based approach to make sure that costs of state government are shared by all, including tourists and workers coming to Alaska from out of state.
- I AM WILLING TO PAY FOR THE STATE SERVICES I RECEIVE.

Education Funding

School districts across Alaska have had to make significant cuts in staff and teachers since 2011, and the governor's proposed education budget represents a \$116 Million reduction vs 2015.

- Please prioritize education funding.
- Please make sure education funding keeps up with inflation, starting with the increases in the Base Student Allocation established in HB 278 two years ago.
- This year's increase in the BSA will be \$50, which will help keep teachers in the classroom as costs rise.

Pre-K Education

- Please restore Pre-K education funding, which was cut in the Governor's proposed budget.
- Study after study has shown that Pre-K public education is a huge cost savings to society.
- Pre-K education allows children to enter school ready to learn, and they are much more likely to begin to read at grade level.
- They are also more likely to graduate from high school, get jobs, and become contributing members of society

Thanks for your work for Alaska, please do not cut services so much that job losses send us further into a recession, lead to people struggling, and end up with a less well prepared and educated next generation.

Sincerely,
Neil Waggoner, PE

Doniece Gott

From: LIO Mat-Su
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:59 AM
Subject: FW: budget suggestions

From: Shonti Elder [mailto:elderfrey@gci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 10:23 PM
To: LIO Mat-Su <LIO.Mat-Su@akleg.gov>
Subject: budget suggestions

As a Valley resident for the past few decades, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to seriously evaluate a way to balance our budget.

Right now, I'm afraid that your cuts are too deep. We need to restore pre K education, and continue to prioritize education, health and social services. We also need to consider quality of life issues such as supporting public broadcasting, which is the most important emergency and news source for many of Alaska's villages.

I'm willing to pay state income taxes to continue our quality of life here. I'm willing to have a smaller dividend, in order to balance our budget, but the dividend shouldn't be cut too drastically all at once because poor Alaskans depend on it.

I advocate reducing the oil tax credits. The world doesn't need us to pay the oil companies to explore for more oil. We need that money to support other worthy causes.

I'm against sales taxes because they are a regressive tax that hurts the poor too much. It's time to add a progressive state income tax, that would also capture money from the many out-of-state oil workers who use our infrastructure without paying anything at all for it.

Please consider a healthy balance of cuts and additional taxes. Thank you for your consideration.

(What email address can I use to reach all of the Alaskan legislators?)

Doniece Gott

From: C Marunde <c_marunde@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:55 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 139

Senate Finance Committee,

I am opposed to the proposed closure of the Northway DOT Maintenance Station. I feel safety should be a high priority for the State of Alaska. The delayed road maintenance will be unsafe for all travelers entering or leaving Alaska on the Alaska Highway. Tok Dot Station is 90 miles from the Alaska/Canada Border. There is no cell service or businesses in a 40 mile stretch of this Highway. If we have another 7.2 earthquake that destroyed the Northway Airport and Northway Road, and have a one hour or more delayed response time could result in deaths. We have also had flooding that destroyed the road and rain in the winter months. Cutting a DOT station in a vastly remote location is not a safe decision.

Thank you for your time,
Cherie Marunde
Northway Resident

Doniece Gott

From: Heather Hebdon <heather.hebdon@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:51 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Berta Gardner; Sen. Mia Costello; Sen. Bert Stedman; bill.walker@alaska.gov
Subject: Alaska Public Offices Commission

Dear Senators,

I am writing today to provide public comment and respectfully express my disappointment in the recommended budget cuts for the Alaska Public Offices Commission. As you may, or may not be aware, last year's significant cut reduced this agency's personnel from fourteen staff members to eight. Two positions were lost from Juneau, leaving one lone employee there. The other four positions were lost from the Anchorage office, which left seven here. Of the remaining eight positions, one is the agency's Analyst/Programmer who oversees our electronic filing system, and is not involved with the agency's substantive work.

The recommended reduction of another \$200,000 will devastate this agency. According to the House's recommendation, \$100,000 will be taken from contractual services. This means that one office will have to be closed. To exacerbate the negative impact of such a cut, Juneau's delegation has continued to insist the Juneau office be kept open, which will require the Anchorage office be closed. The additional loss of \$100,000 in personnel will, in all likelihood, require the layoff of two more staff members, leaving the agency with six employees in all, one of which is only involved in programming work for the electronic filing system. However, when faced with relocating to Juneau, it is probable that the remaining Anchorage employees will also be lost. All historical experience and any institutional knowledge of the agency will be completely wiped out.

I understand the State is in the midst of a dire fiscal crisis, and there is an absolute need to make cuts towards a sustainable budget. However, it is also be the perfect climate to quietly decimate the only agency that oversees campaign finance regulation, lobbying activity, and public official financial disclosure, and at a time when it is so very crucial. A reduction of this size, when paired with the mandate that the Juneau office remain open, cannot be defended as "right sizing" government. Instead it has the appearance of a strategic effort to abolish election transparency leading into what will most likely be a very contentious election cycle for many incumbents. I am beyond disappointed with this recommendation and the bodies that will ultimately approve the destruction of this agency. I am further disheartened by the elected officials who I truly believed were committed to integrity, as well as APOC's mission to provide public disclosure and transparency in the political process.

I implore you to reconsider these recommended cuts to this agency's already inadequate budget.

Sincerely,

Heather R. Hebdon
12901 Atherton Road
Anchorage, AK 99516

Doniece Gott

From: susan crew <crewsue@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 9:59 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: budget

Hello,

I believe that in years of plenty we as a state have created a top heavy government which needs to be reduced now that the resources have dwindled. I do not support the current budget.

I believe that like the rest of us the state needs to live within it's means, and if that means tightening their belt so to speak then that's what needs to be done.

A budget that can't be supported by the current income is not a responsible budget. (ask any financial planner)

I wish to go on record as not in support of the current budget. Planners need to go back to the drawing board.

Thank you,
Sue Crew

I hope you have a reason to smile today!

Doniece Gott

From: Heather Mildon <northernheather@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:15 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget Feedback

Dear Senators,

I understand Anchorage voters may testify regarding the state budget today.

I am an Anchorage voter and urge you to apply a multi-pronged approach to budget planning, and act swiftly in doing so.

We must make needed changes to how we pay for state government and stop relying exclusively on oil. We must increase revenue and cut dividends, while making only modest cuts to services such as education and health and social services that have already been cut heavily in recent years.

We must:

Add new revenues and options include:

1. Institute an income tax at a similar level to other states
2. Institute a sales tax of 3%
3. Institute a modest School Tax as we had in the 1970's of \$100 per taxpayer annually
4. Start a lottery
5. Close oil tax loopholes such as those for new oil that allow full recoupment of losses

This is simple! When one is short on funding, they raise money by getting another job -- at the state level, if you are short, raise money.

Adjust current Permanent Fund usage:

1. Cap dividends and use the remaining earnings toward our debt and state services

I do not recommend reducing the amount of the Permanent Fund that we save, as we all know from household budgets, savings means paying yourself first and should be prioritized.

Budget Cuts:

1. Make modest cuts to spending while ensuring state services remain intact at quality levels.

A budget cannot be balanced based on the "don't spend" philosophy alone, which is what seems to be the mantra coming from our elected representatives too often. Unreasonable.

We must not rely on the Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund, or that savings will run dry in two years, and that is NOT a wise long-term plan.

Do your duty, please, in planning for the long-term security of Alaska and Alaskans and plan the revenue generating mechanisms we desperately need. Be bold. Break old patterns that have gotten us into this ugly financial situation. We are relying on you.

Thank you,

Heather Mildon

907-720-8935

Heather Mildon
Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Patrick Dalton <daltonlogshells@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 7:11 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please read

Finance Committee,

Thank you in advance for reading and considering my testimony. I have been testifying on the budget but I am unable to come in the daytime. I am appalled at many of the testimonies I heard from across the state. I am appalled at the selfish behavior of the Alaska residents that are whining to keep their special project. They are only thinking of themselves and not the long term effects on Alaska.

When any of us has a budget crisis for whatever reason we have to make some tough choices and cut our spending, change our habits and make responsible, mature choices. We have to live within our means unless we expect the government to bail us out. That is irresponsible, immature, and part of the reason we are in the budget crisis we are in.

I look over the bills that are in the committees and am shocked at the intrusive bills that will cost this state even more money. When there is a crisis a triage should occur and all the bills that are going to cost even more money and intrusion should be trashed before they even go to the next committee. The legislature is over half finished and very little has been accomplished. Please set your priorities.

A plan has been given to all the legislators that would balance the budget without a tax. It is the uflalaska.com plan. Have you read it? It is 96 pages of sound plans that would balance the budget. There is no excuse not to balance the budget when you have a plan that could be implemented, a solution to the crisis.

Governor Walker has inherited a budget crisis and is handling the crisis in an irresponsible way. You cannot introduce legislation that will cost even more money, cuts have to be made. Vetoes need to be made if it is not a cut in the budget.

Most of us enjoy our freedoms and lives in Alaska. That is why we are here putting up with the long winters. The legislature has a responsibility to preserve this state and stop modeling us after the other states. The 2016 legislature needs to leave a legacy of the one that cut the budget, stopped the taxes, did not raid the reserve fund, and held strong against the irresponsible whining of all the special interest groups. Take your position seriously and responsibly. Set an example to the residents of Alaska and do what it takes to stop the freight train of this budget crisis. At the end of the day and the end of your life you will be accountable for your decisions to Alaska residents and to God. What kind of legacy will you leave?

Thank you for your service and attention.

Sharon Dalton

Delta Junction

Doniece Gott

From: G Piehl <akgomer@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 6:38 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget Comments

Thank you for your service to our great state and providing an opportunity for residents to let you know our thoughts and desires!!

- I believe the sustainable operating budget to be around \$4.3 to \$4.5 billion. Get it there.
- AFTER cutting the budget, first source of revenue should be the CBR and PF Earnings Reserve, that's what they are there for! Use them.
- I do not consider my PFD to be a sacred cow, reduce that next if necessary, even to zero if absolutely necessary to balance the budget.
- I do not believe an income or sales tax provide enough revenue to justify considering either of these options and certainly do not implement either if we are still receiving money from the state in the form of a PFD!
- Alcohol/tobacco taxes are a sham. Political correctness gone awry. And again, they would not contribute a significant amount to budget balance and just increase the cost of living for residents/tourists alike.
- Gas/road taxes: In favor of these...as long as the monies are fenced to ONLY go to road maintenance/repair.

Thank you again for the opportunity and your service!

Garrett Piehl
Palmer, AK

JENNIFER SHOCKLEY

907-359-1711
enigma@arctic.net

PO Box 921246
Dutch Harbor, AK
99692

9March2016

Alaska Senate Finance Committee
29th Legislature 2015-2016
Juneau, AK

Dear House Finance Committee Members,

I am reaching out to you again this year to strongly urge you to restore funding to public media in Alaska. I am a 25-year resident of Unalaska and a 40-year supporter of Public Radio and Television in both Alaska and Texas. I grew up listening to and watching public media and it is, quite simply, an integral part of the way I participate in and learn about what is happening around the State.

I recognize the difficult financial situation that the State finds itself in, and understand that spending cuts must be made to some programs. However, I would like to consider the following points, some of which may be unique to KUCB in Unalaska and others of which are likely true for small communities across the State.

A 100% cut to local funding would end local newscasts on KUCB Radio. We do not have the benefit of high-speed internet as do many other communities, and cannot simply turn to our laptops for up-to-date news. KUCB is our community's only source of daily local news. Unalaska is the largest fishing port in the country and an international shipping hub, and KUCB is the sole news organization with the capability to report on the status of the fisheries industry here. KUCB contributes near-daily reports to Alaska Nightly News on APRN, making this news accessible to Alaskans across the State - including legislators in Juneau. Without funding for KUCB staff and equipment, this vital source of information will effectively disappear.

KUCB is a crucial part of emergency messaging in Unalaska and works closely with the Unalaska Dept. of Public Safety to ensure that tsunami and other emergency warnings are broadcast to the widest possible audience. KUCB staff is responsible for this emergency content and they are able to be on the air with tsunami warnings and road and school closures because they can financially support a fully-staffed office and on-call employees.

Local listeners value local content over syndicated programming. KUCB staff organizes special programming like broadcasts of City Council meetings and other local events as well as Unalaska Raider sports. In a town that's off the road system, where webcasts cannot be streamed and where plane tickets can cost upwards of \$1,000, this is an important service to members of the community.

Another deep funding cut such as is proposed, and especially full elimination of state funding, puts these essential local services at risk in a community that has few viable alternatives for news, entertainment and emergency messaging.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.L. Shockley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jennifer Shockley

Doniece Gott

From: sue.sherif@alaska.net
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 5:43 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: SB 139 - Restore Online With Libraries Funding

Dear Senators:

I will not be able to go to the Fairbanks LIO this afternoon to testify on SB 139, so I am writing to urge restoration of \$761,800 for Online With Libraries (OWL) and the Alaska State Library to the Governor's proposed levels.

The OWL bandwidth subsidy now combines with local funding and federal E-rate funding to pay the staggeringly high cost of a modest amount of broadband bandwidth to rural and remote and rural libraries. The federal E-Rate funding pays 60-90% of this very high-cost bandwidth for over 40 communities, where the public library may be the only location in the community where broadband is available to the general public. **Without the OWL funds to combine with the community's contribution, Alaska public libraries will not be able to leverage nearly \$2 million dollars of E-Rate funding, and the bandwidth in these libraries will drop back to dial-up speeds.** In a world where business, government, and health care service require one to function online, the speeds that these communities can afford on their own will put Alaskans off the road system at a particular disadvantage.

Without the state library subsidies to libraries, the rural and remote Alaskan citizens who now can participate in online video and webinar classes of all kinds will once again find themselves without enough bandwidth. People who have been able to apply for jobs and their permanent fund dividends, take certification and class exams, or file their tax forms online thanks to the OWL subsidy will no longer be able to do so. People in these communities without banks will no longer be able to access online banking. **State agencies, nonprofits, and Alaska citizens will not be able to realize cost savings in travel through use of the OWL videoconferencing network to about 100 communities.**

The Senate has chosen to maintain the State Library's e-rate subsidies to public schools. The same rationale should apply to the State Library's e-rate subsidies to public libraries. Neither the schools nor public libraries are allowed to charge the public for use of E-rate funded Internet access. Many of the smaller public libraries operate on budgets of \$50,000 or less per year and labor contributed by community volunteers. In some cases the cost for the OWL-subsidized 1.5 Mbps would gobble up half or more of their annual budgets.

Alaska is the state with the highest cost for broadband in the nation. Why would Alaska, even in this time of fiscal crisis want to turn its back on the opportunity to benefit from the E-rate program? Why, especially in this time of fiscal crisis, would we want to leave the federal dollars on the table for others states with far fewer geographic challenges to benefit when Alaskans will not?

Alaskans are contributing to the E-Rate coffers as they pay their Universal Service Funds on their phone bills. We should be able to reap full benefit. Most of the current combined local, state (OWL), and federal E-rate funding goes to Alaska-based concerns such as GCI, Alaska Communications, and local utilities like Copper Valley Electric Cooperative, and ASTAC, so funds stay in the state.

Please restore OWL funding in the 2017 operating budget.

Sue Sherif

PO Box 82668 Fairbank, AK 99708

907-488-2070

Doniece Gott

From: Chris Coffman <chriscoff2002@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 1:16 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Please Reverse the House's Cuts to the University of Alaska

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my great concern about the cuts to the University of Alaska's budget that the Alaska House recently proposed. I urge your committee to reverse their cuts. Their proposed reductions would seriously undermine the university's ability to function as an institution whose tripartite mission encompasses teaching, research, and service. They also reflect a misunderstanding of the complex ways in which university-level education works.

The proposed budget assumes that the primary work of the university is instruction. While teaching is a significant part of UA's mission, it is important to understand that research and service are also essential to the work that faculty do with students. University professors are qualified to lead students in the classroom because we actively produce current knowledge in our fields. Research keeps us up to date in our subjects and prepares us to give our students the highest quality experience; this is why published research is a significant factor in decisions concerning tenure and promotion. At the graduate level, it is especially important that professors model successful research for their students and mentor them in this area as they begin their own careers. Faculty whose research takes the form of creative activity in art, music, drama, or writing similarly need a record of success that will help them show their students how to thrive in their chosen artistic practice.

Service to the university, the profession, and the local community also enhances the university's ability to provide students with a high-quality education. As a faculty member, my job has sometimes entailed leadership in curricular initiatives, hiring and reviewing colleagues, and facilitating public forums. I have also organized seminars and panels for professional organizations that have brought outside recognition to UAF and have kept my knowledge of my field up to date in ways that have fed back into my work with my students. Some of my colleagues have done outreach to Fairbanks K-12 teachers and students as well. All of this work falls under the rubric of "service," and—like research—ultimately enhances UA's ability to give our students the best possible education.

Thank you for your service to the State of Alaska during these challenging times. I encourage you and your committee to reverse the House's cuts to the university's budget and to provide full funding for the university's tripartite mission.

Sincerely,
Chris Coffman, Ph.D.
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Doniece Gott

From: Bob Sylvester <hikeak@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 11:58 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: The State Budget

Dear Legislator,

Since this is the most important topic we have faced in forever I wanted to communicate with each of you. I rarely communicate on this scale but feel it is too important a time not to.

I am a longtime Alaskan resident. I experienced the oil price downturn in the 1980's. It was very hard and very disruptive to my family and to many bright and ambitious people who left Alaska for good during that time. I think we lost a lot of good Alaskans and I hope we can avoid as much of that as possible this time around. People are what makes Alaska what it is.

I would like to briefly let you know my thoughts and my approach to our State's Budget.

I have read and listened to many presentations on the situation and have discussed the problem with many other interested citizens.

I would like to see budget cuts this year that reflect the Governors proposal. I understand the attractiveness of cutting spending but the result of deeper cuts would be an unnecessarily serious blow to the economy of the State.

The economy of Alaska is not as simple as many seem to think. Alaska (and all Alaskans) depend on State spending more than other states. We depend more on state spending because of higher costs of necessary government services caused by the geography, climate, weather, scattered population, and resulting difficulties, (such as transport and storage of goods, movement of people for work and leisure, delivery of services, and low economies of scale for examples.)

In addition, oil revenue goes to the State and state spending feeds this revenue out to the people of Alaska. This flow of "oil dollars" gives Alaskans a share of the resource. It is time to ask for more revenue from all other sectors of our economy and to reevaluate our share of the proceeds from what is, in reality, our oil.

Wholesale reduction of State spending beyond the Governors suggested budget will result in a serious and unnecessary depression in Alaska. Good Alaskans who love the State and wish to remain here will be forced to migrate south in search of work. I am not speaking only of state employees. The reduction of State spending as envisioned by the Majority Caucuses of our Legislature will have consequences far beyond State employees. As in good times the multiplier effect works during downturns. Cutting a dollar in State spending will cause a reduction of multiple dollars in Alaska's economy. That is why caution must be used when reducing State spending. That said I would support the Governors proposal for a serious level of spending cuts this year.

On the revenue development side I support an income tax that is not complicated. If we base the tax on a percentage of what an Alaskan pays the Federal Government in taxes. By keeping it simple we could institute an income tax at a reasonable cost to the State.

I fear a sales tax is regressive and would harm those who could least afford to pay. Additionally many municipalities have a sales tax and a state sales tax would impact these municipalities negatively.

The earnings from the Alaska Permanent fund should not be off limits. Not using some portion of the Funds earnings to help sustain a reasonable State budget would make little fiscal sense. I would like to see a somewhat reduced Permanent Fund Dividend. Since the PFD is very necessary for many Alaskans, especially those who live in rural areas. A healthy dividend should be maintained. A dividend at or above \$1,000 seems to me like a reasonable target.

I also feel very strongly that our first priority in these difficult times should be the education of our children. Funding for schools and teachers should be number one. Pre-Kindergarten programs are vital to our youngest children.

I think of education as the 'food' of our Alaskan society, just as people must eat during lean times we cannot stop educating our children to wait for better times. We must fund the education of our future leaders.

While this budget crisis is extremely serious we should move forward using all tools at our disposal to make fair and balanced cuts and to identify and create revenue sources to give Alaska's economy and Alaska's people the time to develop a new economy less dependent on oil and more dependent on Alaskans work ethic and ingenuity.

Thank you for considering my view,

Robert Sylvester
PO Box 22487
Juneau, AK 99802

907 500-7950

Doniece Gott

From: Felicia Riedel <f_riedel@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 10:34 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget Ideas

Sustainable Budgeting

I appreciate the budget cuts that the Legislature made last year. After those cuts, we are back to state spending levels of 1977 when adjusted for inflation. We cannot cut further without putting our state into a deep recession. Per a recent ISER report, each \$100 Million cut from the operating budget will result in the loss of 1,600 jobs.

- * Please work to develop a sustainable budget for the sake of Alaska's children THIS session.
- * I support plans for obtaining new sources of revenue, including income taxes, reducing the PFD, and a variety of other taxes.
- * I support a broad-based approach to make sure that costs of state government are shared by all, including tourists and workers coming to Alaska from out of state.
- * I AM WILLING TO PAY FOR THE STATE SERVICES I RECEIVE.

Education Funding

School districts across Alaska have had to make significant cuts in staff and teachers since 2011, and the governor's proposed education budget represents a \$116 Million reduction vs 2015.

- * Please prioritize education funding.
- * Please make sure education funding keeps up with inflation, starting with the increases in the Base Student Allocation established in HB 278 two years ago.
- * This year's increase in the BSA will be \$50, which will help keep teachers in the classroom as costs rise.
- * Please restore Pre-K education funding, which was cut in the Governor's proposed budget. Study after study has shown that Pre-K public education is a huge cost savings to society. Pre-K education allows children to enter school ready to learn, and they are much more likely to begin to read at grade level. They are also more likely to graduate from high school, get jobs, and become contributing members of society.
- * Please support sufficient funding for the University of Alaska system. One idea I've heard is to do some combining, and though I don't have the background to know if this is the right route, I do have experience in taking classes at various campuses and not having the credits transfer from Anchorage to Fairbanks. It would have been better for me as a student if UA were one university, and maybe doing that would save money.

Food Sources

The problem of Alaska's lack of food sufficiency has been in the news lately, and it is scary to think how bad it would be if the flow of food from Outside were interrupted.

*Because of that, it doesn't seem right to close the soil test office.

Leadership

The best way to get people on board is to lead by example.

*Close the new LIO in Anchorage and find a reasonable office. Cut your own expenses.

Doniece Gott

From: Pamela Rowell <pamy@ak.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 10:25 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: AK State Budget Crisis

Dear Legislators,

As a concerned citizen and resident of Alaska, I would like to make comment on this year state budget challenge.

First, I am disappointed that our state has not prepared to avoid this fiscal situation. While there are some economic scenarios not predictable, such as the population growth, the price of oil and decrease in oil demand world wide, I do believe our legislators could have prepared for the limits of oil production and the situation of our current deficit and past spending. That said, I would like to encourage your committee to be fiscally responsible and economically serious to solve this problem now.

I am in support of a **balanced approach** to address the current fiscal situation, including the following:

1. No cuts to the current projected budget, it has been shaved very closely to FY 2005 cost per person spending.
2. A tax system put in place for state revenues: sales tax and income tax. Our broad based taxes are lower than any other state.

While benefitting from the PFD for 25 years, I am in support of a state sales tax to earn funds. Our population has grown and we cannot continue to payout to people. I vote for a quality of life and it is not free. I also think residents in all places must have a buy in or make contributions to creating and maintaining great education, health services, transportation, and state services. People cannot expect free and unlimited services, it is not realist. Taxes created should be fair and reasonable.

3. Pay some of the deficit from state savings. A reasonable amount but not draining it low. AND creating a plan to put money back into it for investments and revenue.
4. Solve the problem now, don't wait. We should demonstrate to investors we can address the problem, not affect our credit and the reality is we do not have the money.
5. Use some portion of the permanent fund earnings, while still growing dividends. Though, the reality may be the days of PFD may be done or perhaps capping the dividend. How can we rationalize paying a PFD, but not funding education or health care? Worse yet, to continue increasing the deficit and spend all our savings. A spoiled child would do that. It's backward and irresponsible.

The above are not popular ideas, but we must fill the funding gap in some range or another. We no longer have the security of oil production and we must be responsible to our young people and our economic development.

Further, If we continue to ask oil companies to pay more taxes, we will discourage their investment in the state. The current royalties are significant.

We cannot wait to address this situation any longer and Legislators must do the unpopular choice, as there are no other choices. Waiting for a gas line, increasing oil tax or pressuring oil companies will not help us as it has in the past.

I encourage you to get to work on a fair tax system, a cap on PFD or something related and using some of the permanent fund earnings to pay the current deficit and get spending under control. While not easy, a balanced set of solutions will put us back on track to having a sustainable economy and reset a budget under current oil demands and production. We must look at a more diverse economy and face this immediate challenge responsibly.

I also encourage you to fairly inform the public at large about this reality. People in general do not understand how the permanent fund works.

Thank you for your time, consideration and hard work. We must all buck up and face this together. Everybody will need to pitch in to solve the problem in my opinion.

Most sincerely,
Pam Rowell
13265 Badger Lane
Anchorage, Alaska

Doniece Gott

From: Baxter, Kathleen <kbaxter@city.kodiak.ak.us>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 9:05 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Restore OWL funding

Honorable Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

While in Juneau last year I had the opportunity to speak in person with many of you and thank you for the care and time you gave to that period of extraordinary decision making. You gave me much food for thought as I considered the practical budget decisions regarding library operations at the Kodiak Public Library. This year, I thank you again for your careful consideration as we Alaskans navigate a course of astonishing actions. Leveraging the best and most cost effective resources for our state is paramount.

Please restore the Governor's amount of \$761,800 for the State Library OWL program to the budget. Eliminating OWL deteriorates a cost effective budget strategy to sustain public library internet connectivity for all Alaskans. Without OWL, as a public library director I cannot maximize the local municipal funding, and I certainly will lose the 4-1 match of federal e-rate dollars.

I recall a few members of the Senate Finance Committee last year thinking that by FY2017 the public could pay an internet fee for using the public library internet connection. This is not possible for those 95% of Alaskan libraries accepting federal e-rate dollars. Federal law stipulates that if e-rate dollars for internet connectivity are used in libraries, then the library cannot charge the public for internet connectivity. Currently the State uses 1.5 million e-rate dollars.

If I do the math after losing OWL, and, consequently, losing federal e-rate dollars, the public library will be charging children, cannery workers, parents, childcare providers, anywhere from \$2.00 to \$3.75 per 15-minute internet session. At a critical time of severe, deep cuts at 4% to 19% across the State budget, these very individuals of rural communities who need to participate in 21st century global endeavors as vibrant Alaskans will be counting on the modest, cost effective, OWL and e-rate funded public library internet connectivity. Please restore OWL funding.

I am at your service and urge you to contact me for any clarification or additional information.

Many thanks for all you do,

Katie Baxter

Kodiak resident

Katie Baxter | Library Director | Kodiak Public Library

612 Egan Way Kodiak, Alaska 99615

Office: 907-486-8688 | *Mobile:* 907-654-7377 | kbaxter@city.kodiak.ak.us

Kodiak Public Library Hours: M-Fri: 10am-9pm Sat: 10am-5pm Sun: 1pm-5pm

Doniece Gott

From: Jessica Wuttke <jessica.wuttke@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 8:48 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: School funding

Alaska's greatness is in the hands of our students. By depriving them a good education, we are working against our future. Please fund preK-12 education!

Sincerely,
Jessica Wuttke
6831 Cheryl St
Anchorage, AK 99518

Doniece Gott

From: Lisa Paesani <lpaesani@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 8:29 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

Dear Senate Finance committee. It's going to take a combination of measures to keep Alaska fiscally healthy. Please preserve our schools. Even though it is a large portion of the budget, we need to keep the schools strong in order to keep young professional families here. I am in favor of using the PFD, so that Alaskans get a set amount each year, next either a sales tax and/or a state income tax. You are not going to be able to cut your way out of this. Please use the PFD and initiate taxes so that our state can remain strong without relying on the oil. Thank you.

Lisa Paesani
AnchorageAK

Sent from my iPhone

Doniece Gott

From: Michelle Niland <michelleniland@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 7:12 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Written testimony on the budget

Please include this as written testimony on the budget. I will try to call in tomorrow, but am not sure that I will be able to get off work without more notice.

It concerns me that you are considering an income tax. Frankly, I don't think the legislator has done enough cutting yet to discuss further taxing Alaskans.

I work in a field that has not seen a pay increase in over 10 years. Income tax would equate to a pay reduction after so many years with no pay increase. I feel this puts the carrot on the wrong end of the stick, and encourages my family to drop down to a single income family that could qualify for your expanded medicaid rather than our continuing to work hard. Income tax is a disincentive to work.

Government has grown too big. You should be peeling back programs and laws that aren't necessary functions of government. Alaska's government has moved out of their intended realm and created an enormous footprint. We should not be asking Alaskans to work harder and longer to subsidize others in order to keep them living here. Too many able bodied people simply choose to live where they won't be asked to work, or live in cities and know how to navigate the system in order to get cash assistance for an unbelievable 5 years. Time allowed lingering on TANF should be reduced from 5 years to 2 years, moving in the direction other states have of getting people off assistance and back to work. Likewise, if someone has not planned adequately for their retirement yet retired anyway, I do not see why my husband and I should work longer and harder to pay to subsidize their retirement.

If you won't reduce the enormous footprint of government, then reduce the PFD to \$950 rather than \$1000 and save the expense of hiring the 52 more government employees required to implement an income tax (which discourages strong work ethic). According to Walker's tax advocates, this would bring in as much if not more than an income tax would.

Thank you,
Michelle

Doniece Gott

From: Timothy Johnson <johnsontimothy47@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 7:10 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: comments on state spending

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

My family and I, super voters and life-long Alaskans, share these comments about cutting state spending:

Experts and many citizens agree: Cutting spending is not a solution. I'll drop a few names: esteemed economist Gunnar Knapp, GCI CEO Ron Duncan, the current Governor, and many others in positions of expertise and authority say that the current legislature has created the present "crisis" by failure to act sooner. Every dollar cut in state spending hurts the economy. Period. State spending has been cut enough, perhaps too much, to prevent long-term economic depression that you must bear responsibility for. The Republican party has said that "everyone must feel the pain." Yes, because of your inexcusable lack of basic economic knowledge, every Alaskan must feel the pain you created.

The pain isn't necessary. We do not have a financial crisis, we have a leadership crisis in the current legislature. Properly managed, the permanent fund can keep current spending levels for decades to come without excessive taxes.

Governor Walker's budget proposal is a good starting place. Diversity of income makes sense. But additional spending cuts will only bring calamity, not long-term economic stability.

I wish I could end this note by saying that I have confidence in the Senate Finance Committee to solve the government-created budget crisis, but I have no confidence whatsoever. Your record proves that you do not have what it takes to lead Alaska to prosperity.

Prove me wrong.

Thank you for listening.
Timothy and Carina Johnson

Doniece Gott

From: Greg Demers <gdemers@horizonsatellite.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 6:07 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: Rep. Paul Seaton; Sen. Gary Stevens
Subject: state operating budget

I am unable to testify at my local legislative information office tomorrow, so I am writing to share my thoughts and recommendations on how to achieve a sustainable budget :

Cut spending in every state department, but especially in administration, as opposed to programs ; also, cut the fat out of your own legislative budget.

Stop funding the mega-projects NOW.

Stop funding for all unnecessary programs, like Predator Control, and hatcheries for sportfish (and I hunt and fish, but I know these aren't necessary).

DO institute a state sales tax, and a state income tax. The days of the free ride are over.

DO increase taxes on industries: fishing, mining, forestry, tourism. Look for additional revenue sources

DO cap permanent fund dividends (\$1000 tops), and use some fund earnings.

DO quit wasting time on your social agenda bills, like guns, abortion, etc., and focus on the budget crisis.

My wife and I have lived continuously in Alaska since pre-pipeline days. Alaskans are facing a critical time in our history. It is NOW time for every stakeholder to make sacrifices to insure our FUTURE well being.

Finally, we are not affiliated with any political party, but we ALWAYS vote, and we are not leaving.

Sincerely,
Greg and Carole Demers
Anchor Point

Doniece Gott

From: Dave Atcheson <daveatcheson@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 6:06 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

I am unable to testify at the hearing on Wednesday March 9, on the state operating budget, so would like to submit this :

The reason I am writing is twofold, one is to implore you to find a way to fund the University of Alaska to the Governor's original proposal, which would mean restoring about \$10 million to the UA system.

The second reason is to ask you to please consider raising revenue along with cuts. That means not only using the Permanent Fund, but a graduated income tax, with a tax break to citizens of Alaska (anyone receiving the permanent fund say) so that out-of-state workers pay more into the system than those of us living in the state. To spread it around, a sales tax, gasoline tax, as well as taxes on mining and fishing, should also be on the table. I would also recommend restructuring the tax system currently in place for oil companies and at the very least easing the amount we subsidize their business, especially at low oil prices. I am a realist and know we cannot possibly cut our way out of the deficit and continue to have even basic services, let alone quality schools and a university system to be proud of. These are services worth paying for and having.

As for the University, in my 30 plus years in Alaska I have been witness to a system that has steadily improved to the point where its graduates are in high demand and its reputation has blossomed, today highly regarded in many disciplines around the world.

To see cuts continue to the point where our currently well respected university is rendered a mere shell of its once great self, and where our children automatically venture out of state for a decent education, would be a disgrace. Please do not let that happen. We have had a bright future, that has grown ever brighter due to your support. It is so important to our society, to our state, and to our children, to have a first class university system. To see that unravel, and to one day have to try and rebuild the institution that is University of Alaska back to where it is now, would be a shame, and in the long term wasteful. The progress the university has made, what University of Alaska is today, would be toppled in a matter of a few short months, and would take years, as well as an untold amount of resources and money, to build back again.

Thank you,

Dave Atcheson
Box 145
Sterling, AK 99672
907-398-4216

Doniece Gott

From: Roger DuBrock <roger.dubrock@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 6:04 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Public Radio KCHU

Dear Finance Committee members,

I reside for a good portion the year on the McCarthy Road. I wanted to be counted as a constituent who supports public radio, critical to rural Alaska and I also want to be counted as a constituent who is willing to pay a personal income tax, accept a much lower PFD and support a reduction in the subsidies that we give to well capitalized oil companies to pay for the quality of life in Alaska that we want.

Please show some leadership and do what is needed.

Roger DuBrock

Doniece Gott

From: Robin Nyce <robinnyce@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 5:40 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Budget

Dear Committee Members,

I think we should reinstate the income tax, initiate a sales tax, and place a cap on the permanent fund. I think we should be cautious with cutting state services. The oil tax structure needs to be revisited.

Sincerely,
Roberta Nyce
Kenai

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Anna MacKinnon
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 10:35 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: FW: Public Testimony

Kristen Pratt

Legislative Aide
Office of Senator Anna MacKinnon
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol Room 516
(907) 691-8911

From: Charlene Arneson [mailto:charlene.arneson@att.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 10:14 AM
To: Sen. Anna MacKinnon <Sen.Anna.MacKinnon@akleg.gov>
Subject: Public Testimony

Dear Honorable Senator Anna MacKinnon,

Thank you for your efforts. I appreciate where Alaska is at with the budget. I saw today oil was up to \$38. Plus a prediction that it will continue to go up. Seniors cuts will effect us very much. Yet we have the learned the skills to survive. Young people are just beginning to learn and don't have all the necessary skills. I have worked years to help make sure as many students as possible have a good start. Education in Alaska is changing new innovative programs are finding their way into our districts. Once programs are deleted reinstating them will cost far more in the future. I

know that as adults we are charged to do our best while doing no irreversible harm. We have only one chance at educating our youth. Please help educators achieve

Please try to help education funding to stay on track include the 50.00 increase I think that an income tax is one viable responsible way to help pay for Alaska needs.

Charlene Arneson
Citizen of Whittier

Doniece Gott

From: david hollis <haulaska2001@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 5:39 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Cc: David Hollis
Subject: Please Support Alaska Public Radio

to: Alaska Senate Finance Committee

from: Dave Hollis - McCarthy, Alaska

Hi - I have lived 60 miles off the grid in McCarthy for over 20 years. Here we recieve KCHU Public Radio station broadcasting from Valdez.

Public Radio is very important to our remote community. Please financially support this essential service.

Thank You!

Dave Hollis - McCarthy, Alaska

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

Doniece Gott

From: Julia Phelan <juliahphelan@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 4:30 PM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Support for Early Childhood Education/Best Beginnings in FY17 budget

I am writing from Delta Junction, Alaska, to request that you consider reinstating funding for Best Beginnings with the budget for the coming year. As you probably know, Best Beginnings is tasked with carrying out the recommendations of the 27-member Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn task force which met in 2005-2006 to address the low graduation rates in our state. Since that time, the organization has worked tirelessly to establish and support programs which promote early literacy for the coming generation of Alaskans.

One such program which directly affects our community is the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. I serve as co-chair for our local branch which mails a free book each month to any local child under the age of five, regardless of income. From our inception, Best Beginnings has been a critical sponsor; cutting their funding would affect us drastically.

Our local group has over 250 children currently registered to receive a book each month, and another 150 children who have already grown through and benefitted from the program, for a total of 1800 books hard at work in the homes of our small community of Delta Junction/Fort Greely. So often at our local Post Office, I have watched the joy on children's faces when they discover their next book waiting in their mailbox just for them! And as the years have gone by, more and more mothers are coming back to me to say how these books are their children's favorites, how much more they read together since their children are growing in their enthusiasm for literacy. With three youngsters of my own, I understand the demands that mothers face, and I also appreciate the help that Imagination Library provides to facilitate reading with my own children, this simple activity that is proven to be the one thing that contributes most to their success in school and later in life.

There is so much current research highlighting the value of investing in early literacy (and the Imagination Library program in particular) but if I may, I'd like to include this statement from the December 2014 White House report entitled The Economics of Early Childhood Investments:

"By both helping kids develop early foundational skills and by allowing more parents to actively pursue careers, investments in early childhood development provide benefits not just for children and their parents, but for society as a whole. Children who enter school at higher levels of readiness have higher earnings throughout their adult lives. They are also healthier and less likely to become involved with the criminal justice system. These positive spillovers suggest a role for government to support investments in early childhood development."
(p.5)

The executive summary of the report states that expanding early learning programs will bring a Return on Investment of approximately \$8.60 in benefit to society for every \$1 spent on early literacy. In these uncertain economic times, an ROI of this magnitude shows the question not to be whether Alaska can afford to fund early literacy, but if we can afford not to. Cutting funding for Best Beginnings would be devastating to multiple early literacy initiatives, initiatives that were designed specifically for Alaskans.

On behalf communities like ours across Alaska who depend on support from Best Beginnings, our own local Delta Imagination Library and the 400 local children we serve, I ask that you invest in our children, invest in their success, invest in the future of Alaska. Please reinstate the funding requested by Best Beginnings in your upcoming budget package.

Thank you for your time and your service for our state.

Respectfully,

Julia Phelan

References:

https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early_childhood_report1.pdf.

Julia Phelan

Delta Imagination Library

P.O. Box 770

Delta Junction, Alaska 99737

(907) 460-9365

<https://www.facebook.com/deltaimaginationlibrary>

*Giving the gift of reading, one month at a time,
to the children of the greater Delta/Greely areas*





Kodiak Public Library Association
PO Box 1824
Kodiak, AK 99615
kpla.alaska@gmail.com
kodiakpubliclibraryassociation.org

Senator Pete Kelly, Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol Room 518
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov

Dear Senator Kelly:

The Kodiak Public Library Association (KPLA) urges you to restore funding to the Alaska State Library and funding for the OWL (Online with Libraries) program.

The Alaska State Library provides library services to state agencies; delivers continuing education and online services to all libraries in the state, and collects, preserves and shares historical documents about Alaska. Thank you very much for previous support for *Live Homework Help* and the *Databases for Alaskans*, providing robust research resources. These services are crucial for public libraries throughout the state and impact many rural users. In times of economic hardship, it is the library's public Internet connection that is an anchor for individuals who lack online access.

KPLA believes the loss of the OWL program and reductions to the State Library will be detrimental to Kodiak and all state users. OWL offers online connectivity public library patrons to apply for jobs, access online services and benefits, complete re-training, take distance classes and connect with people statewide via videoconference. In Kodiak, the laptop computers available for checkout were made possible by the OWL program. The state Library and OWL have benefited people in our town and region tremendously.

In Kodiak, cutting funding for internet connectivity will have a profound impact. Losing this funding would be very detrimental to public libraries' connectivity and ability to serve their patrons. In many villages, libraries have the only high-speed internet connection, and connectivity is crucial in today's information-rich environment.

Finally, OWL Internet funding also leverages federal dollars: for every \$1 spent by the state on Internet services, the federal match is \$4. We urge you to restore the governor's funding of \$761,800 to the OWL program, and reduce the 19% (nearly \$500,000) cut to the State Library to the governor's original 4% reduction. These programs are vital to our rural communities. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

The Kodiak Public Library Association Board of Directors

Athenia Large	Jennifer Melin
Laurie Madsen	Taten Sheridan
Jan Chatto	Jordana Long
Gretchen Wing	

Doniece Gott

From: Sen. Pete Kelly
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 4:51 PM
To: Doniece Gott
Subject: FW: Restore OWL funding in the Governor's budget

From: Beth Skow [mailto:bskow@palmerak.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 10:26 AM
To: Beth Skow <bskow@palmerak.org>
Subject: Restore OWL funding in the Governor's budget

OWL, an important program that funds broadband internet used by 43 public libraries for their patrons and numerous agencies, was included in the Governor's budget, but cut from the House Finance Committee's budget and the Senate Finance Committee. I know you understand the importance of this program to many people statewide, particularly rural Alaskans, but did you know this program brings in a 4-1 match of federal e-rate funding dollars? If OWL is left unfunded, those federal dollars are left on the table.

OWL funding is small but immense in its range and scope. Please support this portion of the Governor's request and keep OWL available to those 43 public libraries. If cut, these libraries will not be able to absorb the high cost of broadband internet access. Libraries will be in the difficult position of having to raise funds to cover this cost, virtually impossible for all of these libraries. If libraries begin to charge for internet access, those already underserved members of our communities, many of whom are using library resources, will not be able to afford this cost, either. It's hard to believe but there are many folks across Alaska who have no means for this cost, thus rendering them unable to participate in the 21st century except through their public library. No way to apply for jobs, beef up skills, apply for government assistance, etc.

Please restore OWL funding. It'll make an immense difference to many people statewide.

Thank you,

Beth Skow
Library Director

City of Palmer

Palmer Public Library

<http://pplak.org>

907 761-1371

907 746-3570 (Fax)

655 S. Valley Way

Palmer, Alaska 99645

CITY OF TENAKEE SPRINGS

John Wisenbaugh
MAYOR
citytke@gmail.com

P.O. Box 52
Tenakee Springs, Alaska 99841
Phone 907-736-2207
Fax 907-736-2249

March 8, 2016

Sen.PeteKelly@akleg.gov, Sen.Anna Mackinnon@akleg.gov

Greetings from the City of Tenakee Springs-

For our small Southeast community, the continuation of Community Revenue Sharing (CRS) is vital to our existence as an incorporated municipality within the State of Alaska.

Our FY16 City Government Revenues of \$152,000.00 included CRS funding of \$97,685.00.

Our CRS funding for FY17 is a preliminary State estimate of \$65,555.00 pending financial legislative action. Just this reduction will result in not funding our Public Works and Public Safety Departments for FY17, and a severe restriction on all other expenditures.

We are well aware of the monumental task you face regarding State finances. We just ask that you remember us little guys.

Thank you for your service,

Don Pegues
Vice-Mayor

Doniece Gott

From: Sybil Peters <sybilp2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 09, 2016 10:49 AM
To: Senate Finance Committee
Subject: Alaska - The Last Frontier

It is obvious that oil is not going to cover the finances needed for our state ANYMORE. When I look at the number of people in the state versus the amount spent, I think it is totally outrageous. We were living on the backs of the oil companies which are no longer going to carry the load of nonproductive financial requirements set up by the state of Alaska. We are now required to undo the system that was set up because of high oil prices.

I know for a fact that you have received budgets that show where to cut, furnished by people that took a lot of time and effort to show the best places to cut. I encourage you to follow the lowest budget. Alaska is facing a recession and the Senate Finance Committee should face reality about our ability to cover the empires built during the high oil peak.

Capital projects and state operations need to be cut to the bone. I feel "The Last Frontier" can do without a whole bunch of state operations. We are being smothered with do-good projects and abundant school spending that changes our state into a nanny. Whatever happened to being FREE. Free from waste and stupid unneeded spending that puts us in a debt society that we will never recover from as long as this state decides to take from its people and not turn in the direction of frugal spending.

You have a chance to accept reality and require strict adherence to a budget that stays within the bounds of keeping our state free from burdening the people. Please go down that path and not listen to the takers. Do not tax the people to pay for programs and institutions set up by rich oil. They shouldn't have been set up in first place. We have less than a million people and have squandered billions of dollars.

As a nation we are headed to an unleashing of financial disasters brought on by crooks, cronies, and banksters. The Feds are going to tax the people and we don't need to add to that burden.

Sincerely,
Sybil Peters
Delta Junction, Alaska