

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed cuts to Public Radio. Certainly, I understand the state's current financial situation with the low oil prices and recognize that cuts have to be made. However, it is important that we make them in the right places and in a way that is as fair and as equitable as possible.

With that said, I think that a 59% cut to public radio funding is extreme and would be crippling to their operation, particularly our local/regional public radio station KIYU which serves a broad swath of Interior Alaska with critical services and information. I can't speak to the importance of public radio in the more urban areas of Alaska, but I can tell you that public radio in rural Alaska still plays a vital role in our communities. We rely heavily on our local radio station to provide important and up to date information regarding weather and local travel conditions throughout the year. If ever there is an important emergency message that needs to get out, the local radio station is the first place to call to get the word out. Indeed, if there is any message that needs to get out to the community/region, whether it be for school, tribal, municipal or personal needs, the radio station is THE way to disseminate that information in our area. Not only would such a large budget cut have a negative impact on the way critical information is distributed in our region, it would have negative cultural ramifications as well. As we in "the bush" are not connected by the road system, we are connected by the vital link that is provided by public radio. We use public radio to encourage and promote healthy lifestyles and substance abuse programs, to promote native language programs, as well as important cultural events such as potlatches and carnivals. We use public radio to support each other up and down the river, and we all rely on it heavily each and every day.

Again, I certainly understand that these are unique times for our state and that some cuts are necessary, but I feel that the proposed 59% cut would be catastrophic to public radio in our region. Please take these points into consideration as you continue to discuss any potential budget cuts.

Respectfully,

Jon Korta
Galena, AK.