

From: [Tara Bicknell](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Rural Jails and Public Broadcasting
Date: Monday, March 30, 2015 1:34:39 PM

Dear Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for your service and your attention to my thoughts.

The Department of Corrections rural jails budget should remain in tact. Corrections officials admittedly didn't assess impacts before releasing the budget, so did not learn the breadth of necessary services this funds. I am a volunteer member of the Haines ambulance crew, certified by the State as an advanced EMT, giving my time without pay to make our under-budget public safety system function. Dispatch, police officers and animal control are necessary parts of this system, and in Haines, all are funded with the rural jails money. Our police officers are often the first responders on ambulance calls, and having them on patrol in the off-hours means a trained responder is closer to the scene and able to stabilize a patient until the crew arrives. They also help ensure the safety of our volunteer crew in dangerous situations. I believe having them there saves lives.

Animal control is covered through a Borough contract with the local non-profit animal rescue kennel, and the money spent on animal control through the rural jails budget has much added value because an unpaid Board of Directors works alongside the police department and Borough to bring in money through fundraising, grants, pull-tabs and donations. Without the rural jails money, we won't have the trained personnel to handle dangerous animals and pet emergencies and our kennel would take a giant hit, at a time when we are moving forward in improving veterinary services here.

Second, do not cut public broadcasting funds. Alaska is proud of its unique communities, remote and isolated to create a culture and work ethic that inspires the world to come visit and invest here. Cutting public broadcasting funds would choke off these communities and disconnect them locally and with the rest of the state. Without funds to public broadcasting, we would lose local news, emergency notifications, jobs, economic energy and educational opportunities that cannot be replaced with automation. The cut in the state budget would also disqualify many stations from receiving funding from other sources they now rely on for the remainder of their budgets. To offer another example for how far-reaching state funding is, Haines, Skagway and Klukwan's public radio station KHNS is the most significant renter and occupant in the historic Chilkat Center for the Arts theater. The building just completed a \$200,000 sound and lights upgrade with Rasmuson Foundation and Murdock Charitable Trust grants raised by a volunteer Board of Directors, and the loss of public broadcasting funds would negatively impact the building.

Thank you for receiving this input. I am proud to be part of a system that allows me to communicate with you and provide examples that can help make the best decisions for Alaska.

My Best,

Tara

Tara Bicknell
President, Chilkat Center for the Arts Advisory Board
President, Haines Animal Rescue Kennel
W-EMTII, Haines Volunteer Fire Department

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The power of imagination makes us infinite.
John Muir