

**From:** [Bshu@mtaonline.net](mailto:Bshu@mtaonline.net)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** In case you do not have time for me on the phone  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 31, 2015 4:22:39 PM

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### **Here is what I am to say:**

Hello and Good Afternoon, you have a tough job so thank you for giving me this chance to speak with you regarding fund cuts in HB72, My name is Bob Shumaker, my wife Yasinta and I run Black Bear Farms located in Palmer. I am also the president of the Alaska Farmers Union. The proposed cuts to the Division of Agriculture are not good and here's why. Our state needs a clear vision in these times not rose colored glasses. I know you are aware that for years the budgetary step child has been agriculture. And yet agriculture programs are those programs that remain vital to our economic well being. With or without oil our Div of Ag needs a boost, not a kick in the pants. Instead of cutting the Division budget we need to double their budget and I will explain what I believe becomes self evident. The answer to Alaska's current as well as future picture lies in the people and the land. You will do more for the economy by enhancing economic activity then by cutting it and that is why you need to put agriculture at or near the front. Be truthful, mines are a great for our economy but just try to sell it to the public. What we need is the programs that departments and divisions work together like Corrections, DNR and the Division of Agriculture. We need what makes the well being of the state positive not negative. Yes, I believe the value of a barrel of oil will continue to spiral down, although I hope I am wrong, the truth be known we are almost reserve capacity in America and something has to give. Not tomorrow, now is the time to continue to invest in our future. Give the Division the tools it needs to make things happen. For example, consider the disposal of land and the economic activity it creates. You have an opportunity to chart the course for our future every day and now is the time. We want programs that are positive to the budget and to our people. Programs ran out of Div of Ag include, Mount McKinley Meats, a good example where we build bridges, working together to make all our lives better. The Farm to School program, links producers, kids, and the economy and keeps some of the food money's in state. These are positive for growth. I can understand cutting pork, "but believe it or not", the Division of Agriculture is and has been lean. Now is the time to build Alaska. You will hear from many others regarding their budgets but each time you do please ask a few simple questions. Does it help the economy for the long run? Is it renewable resource development? Is there a payback besides the paycheck? Do those other programs spend their dollars in Alaska? All of you on the committee have a responsibility to grow Alaska. You have the power to make a difference and we hope that you will make the correct choice of reinstating as well as adding to the Division of Agriculture's budget. The message should be plain and simple, "We want to move Alaska forward". Promote agriculture and leave a lasting impression on Alaskans. Thank you