

From: [Doug Fleming](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: cuts to Public Radio in Alaska
Date: Wednesday, April 01, 2015 10:58:54 PM

Dear members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee,

My name is Douglas Fleming and I am writing to you to ask that you reconsider the drastic funding cuts that have been proposed to public radio in Alaska. Our local public radio station, KFSK, is an integral part of this community and enjoys very strong support from Petersburg's residents. It plays a vital role in keeping our community safe, with broadcasts ranging from weather warnings, emergency alerts and even updates regarding lock downs at the local schools. Other neighboring towns, like Wrangell, also rely on their local radio station as our communities are quite distant from larger population centers such as Ketchikan or Juneau where public radio is supplemented by other media.

I have listened to radio for many reasons, since the time I was a kid, and have continued my whole life and have supported public radio and public tv to do my share. In my 28 years in Alaska, I have lived 50% of the time in more populated areas (Fairbanks), and now currently live in Petersburg, which is far smaller and more rural and remote, particularly when out on the water. When living in Fairbanks, we listened to public radio, but not exclusively, as there were other radio stations and local TV that could also provide a public service role. I worked for most of my career with AK Dept of Fish and Game and but here in Petersburg, I and others at Fish and Game used the public radio station from time to time as a means to get the word out on local fishery topics and regulation changes, since so often people do not take the time to read Emergency Orders and News Releases. Our children have learned and assisted with the local radio station, doing radio shows that provide them great opportunities to become more comfortable speakers in public, and sense of self worth for their volunteering efforts. Although so much emphasis is placed on the internet, there have been times when our radio station was the only means to get out word out, such as when earthquakes have occurred and our town relied on KFSK radio to help people respond to requests to evacuate our homes. After leaving Fish and Game I have become a commercial salmon troller and rely on radio whenever I am in range of KFSK or KCAW for news and announcements. The radio stations coverage reaches some of the surrounding waters, and often provides the only opportunity to get local and national news, and public announcements when I can tune in.

Cell phone service is spotty out on the SE Alaska waters, so it does not offer a substitute in many locations. If cuts proposed are made to public radio in Alaska, there will be greater consequences felt in rural areas, such as where I live, where public radio is an important means to connect us.

The proposed cuts to public radio would be devastating to our local radio station. Not only would the station lose state revenue but the budget cuts would bring KFSK below federal qualifying minimums, and result in still additional cuts. These cumulative budget cuts would cripple KFSK, and effectively terminate a service which is vital to our community. I would

expect similar disasters in other rural areas of Alaska that have small public radio stations. Obviously with such short notice on budget freefall, cuts are needed in the state in this time of declining oil revenues, however I would urge moderation in your proposed cuts to a service as vital to rural Alaskans as public radio. I grew up in Maine, which is not a wealthy state, and yet people paid income taxes there, like in many other states, to preserve programs that are valued, and otherwise unaffordable. I do think it is time to consider a careful consideration on reinstating a state income tax, to ensure the continuation of essential services without oil market volatility, and/or looking at how Permanent Fund revenues could provide relief.

Thank you for your service in these tough times, as well as for reading and considering my comments regarding this important topic.

Doug Fleming

Petersburg, Alaska



This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.
www.avast.com