

From: [Kyle Schneider](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#); [Sen. Gary Stevens](#)
Subject: Public Radio Funding
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 4:10:39 PM

Good Afternoon,

I write today on behalf of the aural lifeblood of our great state: Public Radio.

It has come to my attention that the Senate Finance Committee is proposing a 100% cut to public radio funding. This greatly concerns me as a resident of the Kenai Peninsula (where I tune into KBBI at home, KDLL and KSKA on the road), as an educator who relies on programming for student's listening opportunities, and as an artist who greatly values the programming available through these entities.

While I greatly appreciate the difficulty found in creating and balancing a budget (as a teacher, I know it too well), I take issue with such a severe cut. Total loss of funding will severely cripple KBBI and public radio as a whole, landing irreparable harm against a key piece of statewide infrastructure. Such action would result in layoffs, loss of local news, and loss of emergency information.

During last summer's Funny River Fire, KBBI and KDLL served as the best possible line of communication and up-to-the-moment information regarding the fire, especially for those off the grid. Even when I was across the bay, I could crank up my emergency radio (also conveniently sized for backpacking) and hear about what was going on. This provided vital information for my party and I in deciding when was the best time to head to Anchorage.

A loss of this kind will also create an insurmountable gap in funding, adding to the already difficult fundraising environment. Homer has a large number of non-profits already clamoring for pieces of an ever-shrinking pie, and such significant loss would place an even heavier burden on local supporters.

Aside from these things, here's what could happen.

KBBI will lose \$130,000 in direct state grants. That is almost 30% of KBBI's annual budget. The impact on CPB funding in FY18 could be loss of the entire \$125,000 KBBI currently receives from CPB. These are devastating cuts to KBBI.

Twenty one stations will lose between 20-40% of their operating revenue starting July 1. Public media in Alaska is highly valued as evidenced by some of the highest per capita community support in the country. Constituents and local business support grows annually but cannot grow to replace the \$4.2m. Alaskans, especially rural and bush residents, will lose community based programming and services, in particular local news and public affairs.

Job losses: layoffs will occur at all stations, greatest impact at rural/bush stations where staff size is very small, from 2 to 5 people. More than 45 Alaskans will lose their jobs on July 1, with more layoffs to occur in the near future.

Loss of federal funds: \$2.8 million. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting will use FY16 financial data to determine station eligibility for operating grants and matching funds. Eight radio stations and two television stations will fall below the minimum required to be eligible for operating grants:

KBBI Homer
KHNS Haines

KFSK Petersburg

KCHU Valdez

KMXT Kodiak
KSTK Wrangell

KRBD Ketchikan

KDLL Kenai

KYUK Bethel (TV) KTOO Juneau (TV): 360 North/Gavel to Gavel

- 10 stations at risk of losing annual federal grants = \$2.5m. Lost federal matching funds = \$316k.
- Total loss of operating revenue = \$2.8m.
- \$2.8m = 37% of the total federal investment in Alaska public broadcasting.
- SOA cut = \$4.2m Federal cut = \$2.8m Total cut = \$7m

Reductions will cripple local operations as the two revenue sources represent 45-70% of annual operating revenue for these stations. Weakened urban providers will be unable to assist rural and bush stations. APM in Anchorage will be greatly diminished, with probable closure of APRN and loss of interconnection system to distribute public television to the rest of the state. The dominos will fall and public broadcasting in Alaska will be on life support outside of Anchorage.

In closing, I implore you: PLEASE SUPPORT PUBLIC RADIO. It is a lifeblood of information and entertainment to our state.

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Regards,
Kyle Schneider
kylelschneider@gmail.com
(773) 620-3833