

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: AK Budge Woes - Good Luck!!
Date: Thursday, April 23, 2015 10:58:05 AM

All,

I certainly don't envy anyone working for the state legislature at this time. You are all faced with some really tough choices to make. This is the sort of situation where "nothing is sacred" as you weigh budget cuts that could impact education, the elderly, people's incomes and much more. I'm sure you've all received plenty of angry emails from constituents. You can rest assure that that is not how this email will read.

I was only motivated to write based off of something that Sally Jewell said on AK Public Radio. Basically she was calling on the state of Alaska to diversify its economic base. As someone who moved to this great state from the boom and bust economy of Wyoming, I could not agree more. There is no way to avoid a financial roller coaster if the state is dependant on the price of one commodity; oil. The only reason I voted to legalize recreational marijuana was because it provided a new source of tax revenue!

As a DINK household that collectively paid over \$34k in 2014 Federal taxes I admire everyone's resolve to not introduce State Income taxes right away. As you all weigh and measure what programs to cut, listen carefully for new ideas to generate money for state programs. I like the idea of adding or increasing fees for services that have been free or heavily subsidized in the past. For example, increasing fishing and hunting license fees for both residents and out of state sportsman.

The decisions that you make today, will hopefully not only decrease our deficit, but also look for ways to diversify our states economy. We spent millions pursuing clean alternative energy with the Susitna-Watana dam, are we just going to eliminate that project and not find out if it is a viable alternative? Can we institute tolls to help cover the costs of road maintenance? Can we require that state employees get a satisfactory performance review in order to qualify for a step increase in salary? Must we continue to pay off millions in student loan debt for doctors and dentists that all flock to the major cities (i.e., Anchorage and Juneau) and then move once their debts are paid? There are many ways we can tighten our belts and become more efficient with where and how we target our spending. I am one Democrat out there that is celebrating the fact that University of Alaska programs with low enrollment are being eliminated. Why make the state pay 60% of the Universities bills? Especially when UAF-Fairbanks is struggling with accreditation issues. They need to either perform or we'll put the money in the pockets of researchers who can get the job done!

Thank you for your time,
[REDACTED]