



The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20002

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, House Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20002

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 28, 2025

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

We are public radio stations serving rural communities in districts across the country. Federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is essential for stations like ours. We work continuously to serve rural communities with lifesaving public safety information, local journalism, and programming that contributes to cultural preservation and discovery among rural audiences. To ensure this reliable, indispensable service for rural and remote communities across the country, our stations need sustained, robust federal support; dedicated funding for infrastructure; and resources for station partnerships and collaborations. We urge you to stand up for rural America by supporting federal funding for public media.

Our stations are local, independent nonprofit media organizations – in many cases the last locally owned media in our communities – providing vital services to rural and often underserved areas, from Appalachia to the Bootheel, the Everglades, the Great North Woods, the Mojave, and the Yukon. Over 40 percent of the eligible public radio stations that receive annual grants from CPB are defined as Rural Area Support Stations (RASS) and receive additional CPB support. Many stations in urban areas that do not qualify as RASS also serve rural audiences through repeaters and other telecommunications equipment that extend their reach. More than 70 percent of federal funding to CPB goes directly to local stations in the form of Community Service Grants, and, generally speaking, the more rural serving a station, the bigger role federal funding plays in the station's sustainability. On average, a RASS station leverages every \$1 received in federal funding into \$4.50 in support from local listeners and businesses, making this arrangement an effective public-private partnership.

Public radio, supported by the interconnection system, which is operated by National Public Radio on behalf of all public radio stations (even those who are not NPR Members), is essential to reaching audiences that lack reliable or affordable broadband access, creating a lifeline in emergency situations. Rural public radio stations may be the only emergency alert system in rural communities. Public radio's role is even more important when the power goes out. Broadcast radio is often the only accessible information source in these cases, and the investment in public media ensures that stations can serve their communities in times of crisis. As the FCC noted recently, "[b]roadcasters play a particularly important role in ensuring that . . . rural communities have access to up-to-date emergency information during times of exigency, both on a localized basis and during widespread disaster." This is especially true of public radio stations, which provide alerting and on-the-ground reporting before, during, and after emergencies.

For more than 12 years, the Florida Public Radio Emergency Network (FPREN), a collective of 14 public media stations covering the state, has provided critical lifesaving coverage of every hurricane – at times when the local public radio station was the only communication tool available with the loss of cellular, internet, and other less resilient broadcast stations. Last fall, FPREN began tracking Hurricane Helene a week before its "Big Bend" landfall, collaborating with the Florida Division of Emergency Management. Stations then reported during and after the storm passed, and helped residents prepare for another deadly hurricane that made landfall just days later. In North Carolina, where Helene devastated the area around Asheville and 500,000 people lost power, Blue Ridge Public Radio provided round-the-clock coverage of local county and regional briefings, interviews with local officials and affected residents, and recovery analysis. The North Carolina Attorney General cited its work as a reliable source of information.

Public radio stations like ours also have become essential local journalism providers; many of us provide the only local daily news to the communities we serve. It is easy in Washington to think that most Americans have countless options for where to get their information – but that is simply not true in much of the country. Amid the rise of "news deserts," our stations provide essential local news and information about what is happening in local government and business, high school sports, and other news that connects audiences to their community. That is the case on a typical day for KCAW, known as Raven Radio, in Sitka, Alaska. But last summer, when the entire town of Sitka lost much of its internet and cell service for over two weeks, Raven Radio became the only continuous source for information inside or coming into Sitka. The station responded by providing vital news, emergency updates, and a sense of community continuity.

Rural public radio stations also play a vital role in connecting communities within and across large geographic areas. They help foster a sense of shared experience, particularly by hosting public events and by preserving and promoting music and artists unique to a region. Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB), a statewide network that qualifies as a RASS and produces radio programs like *Deep South Dining*, *Fix It 101*, *Creature Comforts*, and *Gestalt Gardener* that showcase the breadth of local interests across the state. Like other rural-serving public radio stations, MPB is essential for promoting local artists and music discovery and preserving local music and culture, like Blues; they also increase music discovery options for rural audiences and enable musicians in rural communities to reach a broader audience.

We are proud to lead public media stations serving rural America. We urge you to continue supporting public media and to protect Congress's almost 60-year commitment to care for rural communities like ours through federal support of public media. Continuing to appropriate funding to CPB enables us to meet the needs of our communities, enhance journalistic collaborations, support underserved audiences with access to information, and celebrate our local music and culture.

Sincerely,

KTNA
Talkeetna, AK

KVMR
Nevada City, CA

KCAW Sitka (Raven Radio)
Sitka, AK

Rez Radio 91.3, KPRI
Pala, CA

Little Rock Public Radio (KUAR and KLRE)
Little Rock, AR

KNSJ and KUMI
San Diego County, CA

KAWC/KOFA Border Radio
Yuma, AZ

KVMR
Nevada City, CA

KUYI Hopi Public Radio 88.1FM
Second Mesa, Hopi Reservation, AZ

KCBX for the Central Coast
San Luis Obispo and Southern Monterey
Counties, CA

KBRP LP 96.1
Bisbee, AZ

KSUT Tribal Radio and Four Corners Public
Radio
Ignacio, CO

KWMR
Point Reyes Station, CA

KVNF Mountain Grown Community Radio
Paonia, CO

KZYYX and Z
Philo, CA

WUFT-TV/FM and Florida Public Radio
Emergency Network
Gainesville and Ocala, FL

WFSU Public Media
Tallahassee, FL

Central Florida Public Media (WMFE and
WMFV)
Orlando, FL

Kaua'i Community Radio, KKCR
Hanalei, HI

Iowa Public Radio
Des Moines, IA

Boise State Public Radio
Boise, ID

NPR Illinois (WUIS and WIPA)
Springfield, IL

Tri States Public Radio (WIUM, WIUW and
WVKC)
Macomb, IL

WGLT
Bloomington-Normal, IL

WCBU
Peoria, IL

WVPE
Elkhart and South Bend, IN

KRPS Four States Public Radio
Pittsburg, KS

WUKY
Lexington, KY

WKU Public Media
Bowling Green, KY

KHEN LP 106.9
Salida, CO

WEKU
Richmond, KY

WMMT 88.7FM
Whitesburg, KY

90.3 KEDM Public Radio
Monroe, LA

WBUR
Boston, MA

Maine Public
Lewiston, ME

WERU Community Radio
East Orland, ME

Blue Lake Public Radio (WBLU and WBLV)
Twin Lake, MI

WNMU-TV/FM
Marquette, MI

Interlochen Public Radio
Interlochen, MI

WTIP North Shore Community Radio
Grand Marais, MN

KKWE
White Earth, MN

KAXE
Grand Rapids, MN

KXCV/KRNL Radio
Maryville, MO

KCUR
Kansas City, MO

KSMU Radio
Springfield, MO

National Federation of Community Broadcasters
(NFCB)
Belgrade, MT

New Hampshire Public Radio
Plymouth, NH

KUNM Radio and Associated KUNM Stations
Albuquerque, NM

KSFR 101.1 FM Northern New Mexico Public
Radio
Santa Fe, NM

KNPR
Las Vegas, NV

KUNR Public Radio and KNCC Elko
Reno and Elko, NV

North Country Public Radio
Canton, NY

107.9 WRFA-LP
Jamestown, NY

Buffalo Toronto Public Media
Buffalo, NY

WYSO
Yellow Springs, OH

WKSU
Kent, OH

KGOU
Norman, OK

KOSU
Stillwater, OK

KMUN, KTCB and KCPB
Astoria and Tillamook, OR

East Tennessee's Own WDVX 89.9 FM
Knoxville, TN

KEDT-TV/FM
Corpus Christi, TX

KXWT, KRTS, KOJP, KRTP and KDKY
Marfa and Midland, TX

KVRT-FM
Victoria, TX

KZMU Moab Public Radio
Moab, UT

KPCW Radio
Park City, UT

WVTF
Roanoke, VA

Vermont Public
Colchester, VT

WVEW-LP
Brattleboro, VT

Central Vermont Community Radio, WGDR and
WGDH
Plainfield and Hardwick, VT

Northwest Public Broadcasting (NWPB)
Pullman, WA

Pacific Public Media, KNKX
Tacoma and Seattle, WA

Community Powered KMRE 88.3FM
Bellingham, WA

WXPR
Rhineland, WI

West Virginia Public Broadcasting
Charleston, WV