

To the House Political Subdivisions Public Hearing

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 1255, which proposes cutting funding for Prairie Public Broadcasting. As a dedicated supporter of Prairie Public, I believe that this bill would have a detrimental impact on our community and the state of North Dakota as a whole.

Prairie Public is a vital resource for North Dakotans. It is a free, over-the-air service that is essential for those in rural areas who may have limited access to other sources of news and information. This accessibility ensures that all residents, regardless of their location or economic status, can stay informed about important local, national, and international events.

Moreover, Prairie Public plays a crucial role in making our communities safer. As the backbone of the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Prairie Public helps keep North Dakota informed and safe during emergencies. This service is indispensable in times of crisis, providing timely and accurate information that can save lives.

In addition to its role in public safety, Prairie Public provides invaluable educational content for schools and families. Through initiatives like the Prairie Public Learning Express mobile trailer, Prairie Public offers free educational tools for educators, bringing hands-on learning materials to schools, libraries, and homeschool groups across the state. This support is essential for fostering a love of learning and ensuring that all children have access to quality educational resources.

Prairie Public also helps prepare children for success in school. As North Dakota's source for PBS KIDS, Prairie Public offers early educational content that is rigorously researched, tested, and proven to help children learn. This programming is a critical resource for parents and educators alike, helping to lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Furthermore, Prairie Public is dedicated to preserving our local history and culture. Through thoughtful storytelling, Prairie Public produces in-depth documentaries and news coverage on the people, places, and events that shape North Dakota. This work is vital for maintaining our state's rich heritage and ensuring that future generations understand and appreciate our history.

Finally, Prairie Public strengthens our democracy by providing fact-based news and political debates. This helps all North Dakotans participate in the political process as informed citizens, fostering a more engaged and knowledgeable electorate.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HB 1255 and continue to support funding for Prairie Public Broadcasting. The services provided by Prairie Public are indispensable to our community, and cutting its funding would be a significant loss for North Dakota.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas Gravel, Principal, West Fargo Community High School