

I'm writing to ask North Dakota legislators to pause and think about the importance of one of our state's treasures to your constituents. By that I mean Prairie Public. For six decades, North Dakotans, with help from the state, have invested in this public service that reaches into every corner of our beloved state and beyond, providing educational and inspirational television and radio for all.

What we benefit from and perhaps take for granted has been built over decades with support from families, businesses, foundations, and yes, government. Just as a farm or ranch or business builds and grows over time, we have together invested in the towers, transmitters, microwave relays, buildings, and staff--the infrastructure and human capital that enables this important service. It's not inexpensive, but it is worthwhile. It takes all of us to make it possible. For the citizens, farms, and businesses of our region who have invested in Prairie Public over the years and depend on it, I ask you to not pull the plug on state support. We do our part, and our neighboring states and provinces help, but support from the State of North Dakota is a crucial component. To abruptly cancel state support would be a tragic and unconscionable abandonment of a beautiful and valuable thing we have all built together.

There's something for everyone on Prairie Public. My favorites are Main Street, Dakota Datebook, and The Jefferson Hour on radio; and Prairie Pulse, American Experience, Finding Your Roots, Ken Burns docs, and Amanpour and Company on television. For many, educational children's programming, Market to Market, or Lawrence Welk are essential. I say this respectfully, you may want to think twice about taking these things away from your constituents. Is our state so poor that it can't afford to help pay for this cherished public service?

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