

## **OPPOSITION TO HB 1255**

It is with great sadness that I've heard that North Dakota's legislature is heading toward the denial of funding Prairie Public Broadcasting. I've lived in areas where the local choice has been WNYC out of New York, KQED out of San Francisco and GPS covering the state of Georgia. Prairie Public is one of the best, outshining even those larger, more 'famous' networks.

My first awareness of anything like public radio was September 1972, in my dorm room at UND, listening to the campus radio, KFJM. I remember being blown away listening to national news and then a cool jazz program, hosted by Ned Wharton who would provide history about the artists and explain the pieces he played. Wharton later moved on to Washington D.C with National Public Radio and KFJM became Northern Lights Public Radio, then merged with Prairie Public. I was hooked. It was one-stop shopping for thorough unbiased news, great music, variety programs with humor, programs of memorable storytelling. Listeners of public radio are known to have 'driveway' moments – literally, sitting in one's driveway with the car still running in order to hear the end of the 'story'. The story could be news, it could be an interview, it could be a life-changing look into the life of another on the other side of the globe.

The very thing that makes state funding necessary is also the thing that makes Prairie Public so important and far-reaching: the *small population* of North Dakota. Prairie Public Radio brings a wealth of national programming to its listeners, keeping them *impartially* informed of developments and events that impact daily lives. Programming such as Morning Edition, All Things Considered and Weekend Edition cover complex events with thorough investigation, lengthy interviews with key figures from all walks of life, all political stances and all areas of expertise. Commercial radio is clearly dictated by 'what sells', often skimming the top of any opportunity to educate its listeners.

The greatest attribute of Prairie Public is its dedication and promotion of life in North Dakota, not just to those living here permanently or temporarily, but to others listening via streaming or traveling through the state. It appears to be painfully short-sighted on the part of the legislature to not see the value in a source that 'sells' the values of North Dakota. I've lived in New York City, in the state of Georgia, in Hong Kong, in France and in Norway. While living in each of those places, I tuned into Prairie Public for its quality of programming and its in-depth news of my beloved home state.

**Please, please reconsider and oppose HB 1255!**