

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Marjorie Taylor Greene
Chairwoman, House Subcommittee on Delivering On Government Efficiency
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Melanie Stansbury
Ranking Member, House Subcommittee on Delivering On Government Efficiency
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairwoman Greene, Ranking Member Stansbury, and Members of the Subcommittee:

WEKU is an independently owned and locally operated noncommercial radio service dedicated to delivering local news and information, arts and cultural programming as well as public safety, emergency and weather alerts. WEKU is heard on 10 transmitters reaching more than 1.2 million people in Northern, Central and Eastern Kentucky, and our station also serves audiences across a variety of digital platforms with free, unpaywalled access to our content.

WEKU has made significant investments in our communities motivated by our mission to serve and educate our communities – not for financial gain. We regularly replace, repair and upgrade our broadcast transmitters, streaming computers and other significant equipment. These ongoing investments include a new transmitter and radio service in Northern Kentucky which was turned on in December 2024 to serve rural Maysville, Kentucky.

WEKU and other public radio stations reach 99 percent of the American population with free over-the-air and online programming and connects communities with national, state, and local news and information, as well as emergency alerts and warnings. Continued federal funding and support is vital to public radio's mission to serve rural communities in America where broadcasting ROI is very low and locally produced news and content is lacking.

WEKU serves a mostly rural audience which includes Eastern Kentucky where some areas have little to no cellular service and broadband internet. Communities rely on WEKU for over-the-air news and information that connect them to Kentucky, the nation and the world. This was evident during the 2022 and 2025 Eastern Kentucky flooding. During these disasters, WEKU remained on the air broadcasting life-saving information to area residents – all while internet and phone service was out in the region. WEKU was a lifeline to these communities and this service was made possible with the help of federal funding.

NPR is also critical component to locally owned, independent public radio stations like WEKU. NPR supports our public service mission in multiple ways including:

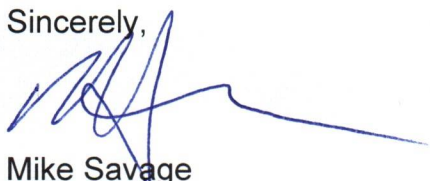
- Developing and maintaining an interconnected terrestrial, satellite, and digital distribution system that connects and distributes content to more than 1,200 stations and other public radio producers
- Providing an enterprise content management system that enables real-time sharing of content among stations and NPR
- Serving as the backbone of the nation's emergency alert system and supporting stations' public safety work
- Enhancing editorial capacity through shared services and elevating local news stories
- Providing marketing and promotional resources and business insights
- Sharing donations, digital audiences, and potential donors from NPR platforms

NPR, and public radio stations like WEKU are nonpartisan public services for all Americans. Federal funding for public radio is essential to ensuring free access to daily local news and emergency alerting. This is an essential component of public radio's universal access mission, with broadcasts reaching 99.5% of the American population

WEKU benefits from CPB funding through annual Community Service Grants that support acquisition or production of programming, music licensing fees, support for the public radio interconnection system, and other system support. Stations leverage these funds into outside support from station donors and sponsors. Federal support is an essential investment. And constituents show their appreciation for that investment – we raise 42% of our operating budget from local sources.

We urge Congress to preserve their longstanding bipartisan support for local public radio stations like WEKU.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mike Savage', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Savage
WEKU General Manager