

**Hearing before the House of Representatives
Committee on Oversight and Accountability
Subcommittee on Delivering on Government Efficiency
“Anti-American Airwaves: Holding the Heads of NPR and PBS Accountable”
March 26, 2025**

Opening Statement of Edward Ulman

Madam Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, it is an honor to be here today. I am Ed Ulman, the President and CEO of Alaska Public Media.

The people of Alaska rely on public media to provide free, universal access to essential services in public safety, education, and community connections. This includes potentially life-saving alerts; updates on community affairs; coverage of state and local government; proven educational content and engagement services; and local and national news.

In many parts of Alaska—and communities throughout the country—public media is often the only locally operated, locally controlled broadcasting service. We are more than nice to have; we are essential, especially in remote and rural places where commercial broadcasting cannot succeed.

We provide potentially life-saving warnings and alerts that are crucial for Alaskans, who face threats ranging from extreme weather to earthquakes, landslides, and even active volcanos. Nationwide, our public television interconnection system supports the PBS Warning Alert Response Network—a critical pathway for the distribution of wireless emergency alerts to cell phones. Public television pioneered datacasting technology to enable public safety officials to communicate with each other without the need for broadband or cell service. In partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, public television has proven how this technology can assist rural search and rescue, over-water communications, large event crowd control, and even rural school safety incidents.

Alaskans use our services to connect to their communities and the broader world through access to local public and government affairs, agriculture news, local history and culture—as well as local and national educational content and news. Our programming caters to and is informed by the specific needs of our local communities.

Just to give a few examples: *Indie Alaska*, an award-winning series of documentaries, captures Alaska’s people, places, and unique stories. *Alaska Insight* is a weekly public affairs program that moves the conversation beyond the headlines and into Alaska’s communities. Our radio station hosts Alaska’s only statewide call-in programs, *Talk of Alaska* and *Line-One Your Health Connection*. These forums encourage listeners to explore Alaska’s issues and personal medical health. We reach across Alaska with these essential, free services through a state-wide network, consisting of four TV channels and one radio station. We coordinate the only Statewide News network, which includes 27 radio stations across Alaska, and we operate the Alaska Rural

Communications System (ARCS), which provides free, over-the-air, television and radio programming to 100 rural communities.

Alaska Public Media is one of more than 360 locally controlled and operated public television stations and over 1,000 public radio stations throughout the country that provide critical services to address the broad range of interests and views of our local communities. These stations collectively reach nearly 99% of the American public, regardless of zip code or income level.

This nationwide service would not be possible without federal support. Today, over 70% of the federal funds for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) go directly to local stations like ours. Our system leverages this crucial seed money *seven times over* in highly efficient public-private partnerships. Reducing or eliminating federal funding would be devastating and could cause the closure of many stations, especially the most rural and remote stations. Our highest costs come from maintaining broadcast and IT infrastructure, local programming, and community engagement. All of which would be in serious jeopardy without federal funding.

Cuts to our national partners—PBS and NPR—would have a similar impact, particularly in smaller and rural markets. The broad range of news and educational programming that we receive from these organizations is popular with Alaskans. Without this national content, we would receive less local support, endangering the local services we provide. This national/local model efficiently leverages economies of scale and allows us to provide the unique mix of local programming and national content that Alaskans want.

Congress's support for the mission of public broadcasting—to provide *every* American access to free, noncommercial quality educational programming—remains critical. It allows us to connect Alaskans with each other and with our neighbors in the lower 48, and to connect the nation with us.

I urge Congress to maintain federal funding for public broadcasting to ensure that local stations around the country can continue to provide essential services to their local areas. I welcome your questions.