March 13, 2018

The Honorable William Patrick Huizenga
1217 Longworth Hob
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Support Public Broadcasting in FY19

Dear Congressman Huizenga:

On behalf of Blue Lake Public Radio (WBLU Grand Rapids & WBLV Muskegon), and our listeners throughout an eighteen (18) county area that absorbs the 2nd District, I am writing to urge you to sign the FY 2019 programmatic request letter to the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee. Congressmen Costello, Reichert, Blumenauer and Yarmouth are circulating this bipartisan letter.

The letter requests strong support for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the Ready to Learn (RTL) program, and the public media’s interconnection system, an essential public safety tool. The deadline to sign the letter is this coming Monday, March 19th.

Blue Lake Public Radio receives 15% of its annual operating budget from the CPB in the form of a Community Service Grant (CSG), which helps us cover costs for the invaluable fine arts programming we provide West Michigan. Quite frankly, our operation could not survive without CPB support.

The driving force behind the creation of America’s public broadcasting initiative in the mid-1960’s was to provide radio and television programming choices to “communities (i.e., communities of people) who would otherwise be underserved” by commercial broadcasting outlets.

As a public broadcasting outlet, what Blue Lake Public Radio provides an otherwise underserved fine arts-embracing community is a textbook example: We are the only fine arts station in the region. More specifically, Blue Lake is West Michigan’s sole Classical music station (the number has dwindled to 77, nationwide).

The reality is commercial radio stations, nationwide, cannot generate sufficient revenue from fine arts programming (take it from someone who spent 37 years in commercial radio) for it to be considered a viable format to satisfy shareholder demands. Thankfully, and only because it’s a public broadcasting outlet, people throughout West Michigan who embrace the fine arts can turn to Blue Lake Public Radio.

On a nationwide scale, eliminating public media funding would have a negligible impact on the nation’s debt, but also a devastating effect on local communities like ours.

Cutting funding could also lead to the loss of emergency notifications and AMBER alerts; broadcast services; cutting-edge educational noncommercial children’s content; local public affairs and news...
programming, innovative classroom resources; rich, local culture and music genres; and professional development and workforce training for teachers, caregivers, veterans, and other job seekers.

I urge you to sign the House ‘Dear Colleague’ letter and support funding for public radio. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Paul Boscarino
General Manager