

Submitter: Sue Matters
On Behalf Of: KWSO radio and Oregon Community Media affiliates
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

My name is Sue Matters. I live and work in Warm Springs, am married into the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and manage KWSO Radio. I am advocating for non-commercial radio stations that are serving communities across Oregon especially in rural areas.

KWSO – is licensed, owned and operated by the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. We are a full-power public radio station with an educational license. We operate as a Tribal Department within our Tribal Government’s Branch of Health & Human Services. We have been on the air since 1986. We focus on programming and online content that seeks to inform, educate and have positive impact for Warm Springs as well as to our surrounding community neighbors.

We are part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s Community Service Grant program. With CPB funding is in the crosshairs of the current federal administration there are very real concerns about the future. About one third of our operating budget comes from that funding.

There are 10 CPB qualified stations plus OPB – and then there are additional community stations, many of which are affiliates of Oregon Community Media. Oregon Community Media or OCM is a 401c3 that is a coalition of locally-controlled non-commercial radio stations and organizations across the state that work together to strengthen local independent media to better serve Oregon communities. Stations are big and small, and few look the same – but all are local and committed to serving their community.

That Service is especially critical in times of emergencies. At KWSO we have helped communicate information during wildfires, floods, snow storms, road closures – in real time, helping our local listeners stay informed, know what’s happening and what they should do. For small communities – a local radio station can save lives and serve people by providing facts, guidance and encouragement.

Independent, non-commercial radio stations in Oregon reflect their community and are focused in serving local needs with content including: news and information, the celebration of culture & arts, needed health and mental health education, awareness of local resources, sharing of local history, and ongoing and emerging public safety info.

Oregon Public Broadcasting receives a million dollars from the state and I'd like to advocate for smaller independent Oregon radio stations to receive funding as well. Oregon Community Media can help administer that. We are drafting a plan that would include a revenue source for this. The support would serve non-commercial radio across the width and breadth of Oregon from Ashland to Portland - Bend to Astoria - Turner to Warm Springs - Shady Cove to Toledo - Umatilla to Mill City to Baker City - and all other places in between.