

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0203
(202) 224-6665
(202) 224-5301 FAX

510 L STREET, SUITE 550
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501-1956
(907) 271-3735

101 12TH AVENUE, ROOM 216
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701-6278
(907) 456-0233

4079 TONGASS AVENUE, SUITE 204
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901-5526
(907) 225-6880

851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE, SUITE 307
WASILLA, AK 99654-7142
(907) 376-7665

May 8, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
United States Senate

The Honorable Sam Brownback
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Kohl, and Ranking Member Brownback:

As you prepare the FY10 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies funding bill, I respectfully request that you include funding for the following programs, which are of particular importance to the residents of my state:

Project: Village Safe Water Program

Amount Requested: \$42,000,000

Agency: USDA, Rural Development

Purpose: This request would support planning, design, construction, technical assistance, and training associated with providing rural Alaska communities with basic water and wastewater infrastructure. Previously appropriated Federal funds, coupled with state matching funds, have resulted in substantial improvements in the health, safety, and well-being of thousands of Alaskans. However, roughly 20 percent of homes in rural Alaska still lack basic sanitation, and a number of the early water systems are aging and of insufficient capacity to handle the current need.

Project: High Energy Cost Grant Program

Amount Requested: \$18,000,000

Agency: USDA, Rural Utility Service

Purpose: This program provides grants to eligible entities or the Denali Commission to construct, extend, upgrade, or otherwise improve energy generation, transmission, or distribution facilities serving communities in which the average residential home energy costs are 275 percent of that national average. This program is authorized under 7 U.S.C. 918a. Funding for this program has been provided since 2001.

Unfortunately, the President's budget proposes to eliminate this important program, which targets aid to the communities most in need.

Project: Education Grants to Alaska Native Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions

Amount Requested: \$3,196,000

Agency, Account: USDA, CSREES, Research and Education

Purpose: This grant program is authorized under 7 U.S.C. 3156. The purpose of these grants is to strengthen the ability of Alaska Native serving institutions and Native Hawaiian institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs. This program was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill through 2012.

Project: Grants to Broadcasting Systems Program

Amount Requested: \$2,000,000

Recipients(s)/Location: Non-profit Public Broadcasting Systems; AK, ME, ND, and VT

Agency, Account: USDA, Rural Development

Purpose: The Grants to Broadcasting Systems Program ensures that public broadcasting systems located in rural areas are able to develop and broadcast programming that specifically addresses the rural concerns and issues of their audience. Without this funding and the matching funds that federal funding generates, the Alaska stations would produce far less local, Alaska programming. This program is authorized at \$5 million per fiscal year through 2012 (P.L. 110-246, Sec. 6014). In FY07 and FY08, USDA made the decision not to fund the set-aside for this very successful and effective program, and restoring funding for this program at the minimum level of \$2 million per fiscal year would ensure continued delivery of Alaska-related services and programming to rural residents.

Additionally, I understand that in recent years the Subcommittee has chosen not to include Member requested projects in the rural development title of the bill. Should the Subcommittee decide to include individual projects in this title, I hope you will give special consideration to the following projects in my state:

Project: City of Craig Community Association Waste Boiler Tie-In

Amount Requested: \$445,000

Recipients(s)/Location: City of Craig, AK

Agency, Account: USDA, Rural Development

Purpose: The City of Craig has constructed a wood fired boiler heating system to supplement propane and oil heating systems for some municipal and school buildings. The system is maintained by the city and daily operations are monitored by the Craig City School District. The boiler system outputs approximately 4 million BTUs per hour by burning wood waste products generated by local mills and transferring the resulting energy to the facilities as hot water. This project will use excess heat generated from the existing plant to heat the tribal hall, reducing the tribe's reliance on fossil fuels. The addition of the Craig Community Association Building to the system will also decrease each organization's share of operating costs by distributing costs over more agencies. The project will decrease operations costs for the Tlingit and Haida Head Start, the University of Alaska Southeast educational center, the tribal offices, and community users of the hall. The project utilizes what would otherwise be incidental wood waste generated from timber harvest of Tongass National Forest. Previously this project has received funding from both USDA and the Department of Energy.

Project: Fairbanks North Star Borough Wildfire Mitigation and Biomass Development

Amount Requested: \$1,000,000

Recipients(s)/Location: Fairbanks North Star Borough, AK

Agency, Account: USDA, Rural Development

Purpose: This request would provide funding to complete Phase III of the hazardous fuel reduction program and bio-fuels development project in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Funding would allow for the treatment of approximately 2,000 acres of diseased and dying black spruce forests. These forests are on Federal, state, and borough property and are near settled areas that have been identified by the Community Wildfire Protection Plan as at-risk communities. The wood waste generated by this project would be used as a fuel source in the Fairbanks North Star Borough bio-fuels program.

Finally, I request that you include the following report language, which reaffirms the Department of Agriculture's role in conducting snow surveys and water forecasting:

Conservation operations are authorized by Public Law 74-46 (16 U.S.C. 590a-590f). Activities include: Snow Survey and Water Forecasting.--Provides estimates of annual water availability from high mountain snow packs and relates to summer stream flow in the western States and Alaska. Information is used by agriculture, industry, and cities in estimating future water supplies.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest in any of the congressionally directed spending items that I have requested, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate. I further certify that I have posted a description of the items requested on my official website, along with the accompanying justification.

Thank you for your consideration of my requests. I look forward to working with you as the Committee develops this bill. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth McDonnell from my staff by phone at (202) 224-9306 (direct) or via email at elizabeth_mcdonnell@murkowski.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator