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Care, Terry Senator

From: Lamar Marchese [patlamar@accessnv.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 27, 2003 4:07 PM
To: tcare@sen.state.nv.us
Cc: Florence Rogers; Jay Bartos
Subject: RRS Senate Finance Letter

2/27/03

MEMO

TO: Chairman Raggio, Senate Finance Committee

CC: Senators Rawson, Cegavske, Coffin, Matthews, Rhoads & Tiffany

**FROM: Lamar Marchese, President & General Manager
Nevada Public Radio Corporation**

RE: Senate Bill No. 92

I regret that I will be unable to testify next Monday, March 3rd on behalf of Senate Bill #92. I will be in Washington, DC for a public broadcasting meeting and a trip to Capitol Hill to visit the Nevada Congressional delegation. I have asked our Assistant General Manager Florence Rogers and Radio Reading Services Director Jay Bartos to be available at the Monday hearings to represent Nevada Public Radio.

The recipient of the appropriation contained in Senate Bill 92 is the Nevada Public Radio Corporation, a non-profit public benefit corporation incorporated in Nevada since 1975 with a mission of providing high quality non-commercial radio program and services to Nevada. We are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors made up of prominent local citizens with advice from a Community Advisory Board that is broadly representative of our community.

Our flagship station KNPR-FM in Las Vegas signed-on the air in 1980 and programs NPR news and classical music. We also operate KTPH in Tonopah, KLNK in Panaca and KWPR in Lund/Ely. In addition, we also operate 11 rural translators and in total cover over 49,000 square miles of Nevada and approximately 73% of the states population.

In addition to our FM main channel broadcasts, Nevada Public Radio has since 1993 also operated a 24-hour a day Radio Reading Service. This service provides readings from a wide variety of local and national newspapers, magazines and books for blind and other print impaired listeners. Anyone unable to read standard printed material is eligible to borrow a special receiver needed to hear the service. These receivers are made available totally without charge. The vast majority of listeners are disabled seniors on very limited incomes. The backbone of the system are fifty-three volunteer readers who donate more than 1200 hours a year of their time to keep the Radio Reading Service operating. Nevada Public Radio is the sole provider of this service in Nevada.

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Up until late last year, this service was confined to southern Nevada. With the award of a Federal grant of \$48,000 and the cooperation of participating public radio stations we were able to expand the service to Reno/Carson City, Tonopah, Elko and Ely. The grant however only paid for the equipment to establish the service.

With the system now up and running in the new locations, we have requested state support to help us meet the increased operating costs of statewide service. The \$50,000 we have requested, \$25,000 per year over the biennium, would help us pay for such things as the \$12,000 annual satellite fees for rental of channel space, repair and purchase of new receivers, engineering fees and other legitimate operating expenses.

Our daily readings from the Las Vegas Review Journal, Las Vegas Sun, Reno Gazette Journal and Nevada Appeal and other scheduled readings of rural newspapers offers our blind and print impaired listeners the chance to become more fully aware of community events, politics and news which often leads to fuller involvement in the community and increased independence.

A study on problems of senior citizens & rural health care commissioned by the 2001 Legislature reported last October that Nevada needs more community services for its senior and disabled population. The study found that "in nearly every component of community services, funding for seniors and the disabled fall far below national average."

We are certainly aware of the funding problems that Nevada faces. The modest state investment we have requested will augment private funds raised by the station and provide approximately one third of the annual Radio Reading Service operating budget. Requested funding will be used to serve a very hard to reach population with a vital information service tailored specifically for their needs.