

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
United States Senate Committee on
Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on
Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 15, 2025

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Schumer, Chair Collins, and Ranking Member Murray:

We write to strongly urge you to maintain full federal funding for public broadcasting as you consider H.R. 4, the Rescissions Act of 2025. A federal halt of funding would hurt domestic community TV and radio stations supported by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR). Public broadcasting is pivotal to North Carolina, and across the country, especially during hurricane season and other natural disasters.

In North Carolina, public broadcasting, including both radio and television stations, played a vital role during Hurricane Helene, serving as a critical lifeline for communities affected by the storm. They provided essential, life-saving information, particularly when traditional communication channels were disrupted by the hurricane's impact.

Critical Emergency Information Dissemination

Public broadcasters such as PBS and NPR affiliates provide reliable, timely, and accessible information during emergencies. During hurricanes, they broadcast evacuation orders, safety instructions, weather updates, and emergency resources. Reduced or cut funding can limit their ability to operate 24/7 during crises, delaying critical information to constituents.

During Hurricane Helene when communities in western North Carolina lost power and the internet, many relied exclusively on public radio for updates, such as when the water was coming back on or what local food resources were available. It also provided a platform for county emergency teams to give multiple updates during the day to ensure people were safe. It truly was a lifeline for many people in North Carolina.

Reaching Vulnerable and Rural Communities

Many parts of North Carolina are rural with limited access to high-speed internet or cable. Public broadcasting reaches these communities via radio and TV over the airwaves without internet. Cutting funds reduces coverage quality and programming reach, leaving vulnerable populations less informed.

Trusted Local Reporting

Public broadcasters often provide hyper-local news and updates. During hurricanes, local stations tailor information specific to affected counties on shelters, road closures, and recovery efforts. Reduced funding would mean fewer reporters, less in-depth local coverage, and more reliance on national or generic sources that may not reflect local needs.

During Hurricane Helene, trusted local reporting delivered crucial, detailed information about accessing essential resources. For instance, although gas supplies were adequate, road closures made it difficult for many to reach fuel stations. Additionally, local businesses were forced to operate on a cash-only system due to their inability to process credit card transactions. Understanding the severe travel limitations faced by residents, local reporters ensured that people were not directed to locations where they would be unable to obtain vital necessities. This precise, on-the-ground information and knowledge of local areas were indispensable for survival during and after the storm, which national stations would not be able to provide.

Community Connection and Recovery

After a disaster like Hurricane Helene, public broadcasting helped with recovery by sharing information about aid, volunteer efforts, and rebuilding. They also offer a platform for affected communities to share stories, stay connected, which is essential for solidarity in the aftermath of such devastation.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to maintain full federal funding for public broadcasting as you consider H.R. 4, the Rescissions Act of 2025. Cutting funds for public broadcasting in North Carolina, and across the country, undermines trusted, accessible, and crucial communication tools during natural disasters. It puts residents, especially those in rural and vulnerable communities, at greater risk by limiting access to life-saving information and recovery resources.

Sincerely,



Alma S. Adams, PhD
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress