

**Native American Public Radio
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Regarding the Reauthorization of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting**

**Testimony of Loris Ann Taylor
General Manager KUYI Hopi Radio
Hotevilla, Arizona
July 13, 2004**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman McCain and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of the reauthorization of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Today, I would like to focus on the Native American Public Radio system which consists of 32 radio stations located throughout Indian Country in nine states reaching more than 500,000 listeners. Native Public Radio is supported by the work of the American Indian Radio on Satellite – a program distribution operation based in Lincoln, Nebraska, and Koahnic Broadcast Corporation – a major national production center with offices in Anchorage, Alaska and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

My perspective is based on my experience and responsibilities as general manager for KUYI, an FM station located on the Hopi Reservation in Northern Arizona. My station has been on-air for four years.

THE ROLE OF RADIO IN INDIAN COUNTRY

As sole service providers, Native stations offer some of the best examples of the powerful benefits that accrue to communities because of strong public broadcasting outlets with deep local roots and strong commitments to local service.

The *Indian Country News Bureau* -- a partnership between Northern Arizona University's public radio station KNAU and KUYI -- was established in response to a desire in both communities to have better local news coverage; and it works because both partners agree there is an important need to introduce Native American issues onto the mainstream National Public Radio communications highway. As a result, stories like the

Hopi people's vote against gaming can be heard not only on KUYI but on Arizona Public Radio and NPR as well.

Native stations play a significant role in keeping native languages alive and, in some cases, have led to resurgence in native language use. On my Reservation, the loss of the Hopi language is more than 90 percent in some villages. This fact makes our Hopi language programs extremely important.

Native stations provide important educational and health programming. *KUYI House Calls*, a weekly program, connects the radio station with the work of the Hopi Health Care Center by providing critical information on diabetes, alcohol and substance abuse, and heart disease. KUYI in partnership with the Hopi Junior-Senior High School established the first Radio Class with the two-fold mission of building succession for the radio station and to open career opportunities for local students in the field of communications.

Whether broadcasting from remote Native communities in Bethel and Barrow Alaska, the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation, or Navajo lands in New Mexico, the overarching role of Native Public Radio is to serve as an important voice and leader within native communities.

FUNDING INDIAN COUNTRY RADIO

CPB provides much of the funding that makes Native Public Radio possible and these investments are producing important returns. *Native America Calling*, a daily live call-in program about relevant and current issues, connects tribes electronically. *AIROS* distributes programming twenty-four hours a day, allowing stations to extend their broadcast days while making the most of very limited staff resources. CPB's support of core Native Radio programming has been critical to its development and survival. On average, CPB provides nearly one-third of overall annual revenues for Native stations.

In spite of its many successes, there is no question that Native Radio operates in very difficult environments and continues to face enormous challenges. The circumstances, resources and history of the Native Radio System are very different than “mainstream” public radio and its model of listener—based contributions and financial support. Financial constraints, tribal dynamics, widely scattered Native populations, and poor tribal economies with high unemployment, are all significant limiting factors.

THE CENTER FOR NATIVE AMERICAN PUBLIC RADIO

One of the most promising changes on the horizon of Native Radio is the proposed establishment of the Center for Native American Public Radio. With an initial investment from CPB, the Center will serve a critical role in identifying and developing specific strategies to bring new revenue resources into the Native Public Radio System. It will also provide leadership and efficiency; and make centralized services available in engineering and financial management to help stations enhance their operations. The Center will be established within the National Federation of Community Broadcasters (NFCB), an organization dedicated to serving community stations for over 29 years.

CONCLUSION

The CPB provides vital assistance and its continued support of the Native Public Radio System is critical. Congress can help by providing continued funding for CPB and by supporting CPB’s key priorities for Native public radio’s long-term sustainability.

I thank the leadership of CPB and in particular, President and CEO Kathleen Cox and Senior Vice President Vincent Curren for making it a priority to take a first-hand look at the State of the Native American Public Radio System and for working hard to improve the system. On behalf of the Native American Public Radio System, Chairman McCain, and members of this Committee, thank-you for the years of support and wise guidance you have given to public broadcasting. I ask that this Committee reauthorize the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and continue to support the good work that it does.

July 12, 2004

Chairman McCain and Members of the Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee

I am writing today to share with you some of the accomplishments of Koahnic Broadcast Corporation, the Native media center headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska, and to let you know how instrumental funding and support from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting has been in making these accomplishments possible.

Koahnic Broadcast Corporation (KBC), established in 1992, is the leading producer of nationally distributed Native American programming for public radio. From the Badlands of the Dakotas to the streets of New York, and from the Bering Sea to the LA freeways, KBC's technically and editorially high-quality programs are adding to the diversity of viewpoints available to the American general public as well as within and between Native communities.

In Alaska, where according to recent US Census figures nearly 20% of the statewide population is Native, KBC has established KNBA 90.3 FM, the nation's first Native public radio station in an urban area. KNBA's progressive music format is infused with the music of contemporary Native artists, and its morning, mid-day and afternoon broadcasts feature local Native news, interviews with local Native leaders and community members, community reports and public service announcements.

Without CPB funding, radio stations serving diverse audiences in the way that KNBA does would literally be unable to exist. CPB funding has made it possible for KNBA to pioneer and refine its unique mix of progressive music and award-winning Native programs by supporting both local production and the acquisition of national programming. With CPB providing basic annual support, KNBA is able to incorporate elements like news from National Public Radio and the Alaska Public Radio Network, and programs from American Indian Radio on Satellite in order to broaden the listenership of the station while maintaining its unique and important focus on original Native programming for local, regional and national audiences.

Our yearly station grant from CPB funding supports our efforts to build a sustainable financial base for KNBA over time. KNBA membership dollars consistently grow with each membership drive, and CPB support helps KNBA leverage funding from foundation funders and state arts and humanities agencies, as well as business underwriting for cultural and news programming on KNBA.

The mission of KBC is to be the leader in bringing Native voices to the region and the nation, and in accordance with this mission, KBC not only operates KNBA 90.3 FM, but produces three national Native American radio programs: *Native America Calling* (NAC), *National Native News* (NNN), and the weekly program of Native music and culture, *Earthsongs*. These three programs reach national audiences through radio

stations nationwide, including almost every Native station. In addition, they are available on the internet for listeners worldwide to listen in and participate in discussions.

Native America Calling, is a daily live talk program that links Native radio stations and their listeners together in a national discourse. Through *NAC*, members of rural and reservation Native communities and Native people listening from urban areas can call in and speak directly to people closest to Native issues. For its entire 17 years, *National Native News* has been the leading daily news service focused on Native issues. NNN is perhaps the most widely heard, daily minority news program in the country. Functioning as the equivalent of the *All Things Considered* of Native radio, *NAC* and *NNN* are the uniting force in Native radio and serve as the common carried programs. Broadcast by nearly every Native station, these programs provide a common voice for all American Natives.

Despite the recognized service these programs provide, they have historically operated on a budget barely adequate to survive. CPB, a committed and involved funding partner from the beginning, has recognized the critical importance of these programs to Native radio and has recently granted support through 2006 to *NAC* and *NNN*, to strengthen all facets of both programs for long-term significance, sustainability and viability.

Native radio stations are providing important service to their communities. They are often considered essential institutions in their communities and, in many places, are the only source of hard news and information about issues of concern to Native Americans. In addition, they are also key cultural assets; keeping Native languages alive, and acting as a holder of history and culture—acting as a “home” to those who live within the station’s signal.

CPB funding investments in programming and infrastructure have clearly paid off, as national programming for the Native radio system has become an essential element in the program service offered by stations in their communities. *Native America Calling*, for example, has almost universal live carriage by Native stations and provides the only national daily conversation among Natives about important issues.

Koahnic Broadcast Corporation is proud of our many accomplishments, including the numerous regional and national awards for news programs and cultural features we have produced, the opportunity to provide training and assistance to early-career Native broadcasters and to rural Native stations such as KUYI in Arizona and KCUK in Chevak, Alaska, statewide broadcasts of the annual Alaska Federation of Natives Convention and nationwide broadcasts of significant Native events including the 3rd and 4th annual Native American Music Awards, our success in growing membership and underwriting revenues, and the establishment of a Native Program Fund Endowment designed to ensure that quality Native programming is sustained over time. This pride in our accomplishments is greatly mixed with sincere gratitude for the essential part CPB has played both in our success, and in the growth of Native broadcasting throughout the nation.

Best regards,

Jaclyn Sallee
President & CEO

THE HOPI TRIBE



Wayne Taylor, Jr.
CHAIRMAN

Caleb H. Johnson
VICE-CHAIRMAN

Senator John McCain, Chairman
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC
20510-6125

July 1, 2004

Dear Senator McCain:

I am writing this letter in support of KUYI 88.1 FM, a Native owned radio station. I write in support of continued funding of Native radio in Indian Country. KUYI made its on-air debut on Dec. 20, 2000 after years of planning and development. The station has never looked back, but is instead progressing toward increasing standards of excellence.

Last year, Vincent Curren, senior vice president of Radio for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) visited KUYI to understand what makes Native radio stations so unique. Mr. Curren expressed how thoroughly impressed he was with the station's service and described it as one "that provides an amazing level of community service and serves as a model for other stations to follow."

KUYI is just one of 32 Native radio stations in 9 states in the United States. CPB allows Native radio to have a strong, far-reaching voice on Native homelands. We need more stations like these in Indian Country. Such stations provide a wealth of knowledge and cultural exchange.

KUYI, and others in Indian country, is not just a radio station; it's a school without walls. It's an institution that teaches, employs, educates, and provides a voice for the community.

I have found in my capacity as public relations officer for the Hopi Tribe that KUYI is indispensable. My office provides a weekly broadcast called the "Hopi Tribal Report". It is a news format program that provides updates to the Hopi public about occurrences in the tribal, state and federal government. Further, whenever breaking news occurs, I immediately call KUYI because it is a guaranteed source to keep the Hopi community abreast of developing stories. I trust that it will continue to be such an institution. It provides a tangible means to preserving the Hopi people's heritage and culture especially when the broadcasts are conducted in the Hopi language. Similar radio stations on other reservations can attest to these claims as well. I hope that Native radio will continue to be a legacy for all Native people. I have faith that funding and support from CPB will not be interrupted for Native radio.

Respectfully,


Vanessa A. Charles
Public Relations Officer
The Hopi Tribe



July 9, 2004

Senator John McCain
Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6125

Dear Senator McCain,

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) has been instrumental in making possible the Indian Country News Bureau (ICNB) partnership between public radio stations KNAU and KUYI.

The ICNB gathers and distributes significant news from northeastern Arizona and the Four Corners area to public radio stations throughout the region. Numerous reports have been nationally broadcast on NPR, National Native News and other public radio programs.

Northern Arizona University (NAU), the licensee of KNAU-FM, has as one of its Strategic Goals to "Be the Nation's Leading University Serving Native Americans." NAU is proud to be a partner in the Indian Country News Bureau initiative.

One of public radio's principal functions is providing lifelong learning opportunities as a public service. Indian Country News Bureau lives up to that lofty ambition. Listeners to ICNB reports have gained tremendous insight into issues and concerns of Native American people. They have heard about the successes as well as the challenges facing indigenous people. For instance:

- Navajo tribal consideration of the death penalty
- White Mountain Apache economic recovery from devastating fires.
- Zuni water rights legislation.
- Hopi tradition of cross-country running.

ICNB productions have received awards from the Arizona Associated Press, the Radio Television and News Directors Association, the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, and Public Radio News Directors Incorporated.

Perhaps most significantly, ICNB has advanced understanding between Native and non-Native peoples. None of this would have been possible without initial financial support and encouragement from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

I urge the U.S. Senate to reauthorize CPB and to continue its generous financial support of CPB.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'JOHN STARK'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

John Stark
KNAU General Manager

The Native Public Radio System

The Native Public Radio System consists of 32 radio stations¹. The total Native population covered by these stations is nearly 500,000. The Native Radio system includes the American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS)— a program distribution operation based in Lincoln, NE and Koahnic Broadcast Corporation (KBC) — a major national production center in Albuquerque, NM.² The system also includes several independent and station-based program producers.

Localism at Work



The *Indian Country News Bureau*, a joint partnership between KUYI and KNAU Public Radio features local news from Indian reservations in northeastern Arizona. ICNB news is heard on Arizona Public Radio and National Public Radio. Other programming includes **Hopi** language shows, *Shooting Stars* a show for children, and *Newsmakers* a public affairs program.

Loris Ann Vicente-Taylor, General Manager KUYI 88.1 FM



In Wisconsin, WOJB's *Saturday Morning Fire*, is a two hour public affairs program featuring local, regional, and national Native issues, local **Ojibway** Tribal News, and telephone interviews with Native leaders, elders, and youth sharing information about the events in their communities.

Camille Lacapa, General Manager WOJB 88.9 FM



In South Dakota, KILI has been a life-line of information for the **Lakota** people -- broadcasting live public hearings on important issues *with Lakota interpreters* so that everyone can understand the impact of these issues on their lives. KILI is a ray of hope and a tool of change for the Lakota to build new, healthy and productive futures.

Melanie Janis, Station Manager KILI 90.1 FM



In Arizona, KNNB begins the day with traditional Native American music and then switches to a locally produced program of mainstream country-and-western, followed by local issues-oriented programs on education, health and crime as well as *Ndee*, a program on **Apache** culture.

Vangie Natan, Station Manager KNNB 88.1 FM



Koahnic's production center in Albuquerque, New Mexico produces national programs, including *National Native News*, *Native America Calling*, *Earthsongs*, *Stories of Our People*, and *Native Word of the Day*. The **KBC Training Center**, is a media training facility dedicated to increasing the number of Native people employed in media fields. KNBA radio, the only Native urban station, is a project of KBC, a nonprofit, **Alaska Native** governed and operated media center located in Anchorage, Alaska.

Jaclyn Saltee, President & CEO & KNBA 90.3 FM



AIROS, located in Lincoln Nebraska, is an international distributor of Native American programming through the Public Radio Satellite System - providing Native American music, news, entertainment, interviews and discussions of the current issues in Indian Country and the world.

Frank Blythe, Executive Director NAPT

ALASKA

KNBA FM, Anchorage
KBRW AM, Barrow
KYUK AM, Bethel
KCUK FM, Chevak
KZPA AM, Ft Yukon
KIYU AM, Galena
KOTZ AM, Kotzebue
KSDP AM, Sand Point
KUHB FM, St Paul Island
KNSA AM, Unalakeet

ARIZONA

KNNB FM, Whiteriver
KGHR FM, Tuba City
KOEN FM, Sells
KRMH FM, Tec Nos Pos
KUYI FM, Hotevilla

CALIFORNIA

KIDE FM, Hoopa

COLORADO

KSUT FM, Ignacio

MONTANA

KGVA FM, Harlem

NORTH DAKOTA

KABU FM, St Michaels
KEYA FM, Belcourt
KMHA FM, New Town

NEW MEXICO

KABR AM, Magdalena
KCIE FM, Dulce
KSHI FM, Zuni
KTDB FM, Pine Hill

OREGON

KWSO FM, Warm Springs
KCUW LP, Pendleton

SOUTH DAKOTA

KILI FM, Porcupine
KLND FM, McLaughlin

WASHINGTON

KYNR AM, Toppenish

WISCONSIN

WOJB FM, Hayward

WYOMING

KWRR FM, Ft Washakie

ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS

National Museum of American Indian

Native Media Resource Center

National Federation of Community Broadcasters

¹ Many Native stations benefit from the federal investment in public broadcasting by receiving annual grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

² AIROS, KBC, and ICNB also receive distribution and program production support from CPB.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS
The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #WAS-04-003



TITLE: NCAI Support for the Native Radio System and Urging Congress to Support and Endorse Continued Funding for the Native Radio System through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Native Radio System consists of more than 30 Native-owned and operated stations, Kowabik Broadcasting Corporation, a major national production center, and the American Indian Radio on Satellite, a distribution operation providing 24 hour program service for stations and available to listeners on-line; and

WHEREAS, Native stations are essential institutions in their communities serving as critical means of communication by providing hard news and information about tribal sovereignty, health, public safety, community events and other tribal issues; and

WHEREAS, Native radio is unique in that it is often the only place where people on a reservation can hear programming about, for, and by people of Native communities, where Native people can hear their language spoken, and where traditions and stories of native culture are shared; and

WHEREAS, investments in national infrastructure and programming such as Native America Calling provides a daily national conversation among Native people about important issues and plays an essential role in making programming available to stations; and

WHEREAS, some stations have successful youth programs that provide opportunities in broadcast and journalism education and careers; and

WHEREAS, the Native Radio System faces unique environmental challenges including a high unemployment rate on reservations and all of the challenges associated with poverty and its impact on the functioning of the stations from fundraising to staffing and programming; and

WHEREAS, the Native Radio System agrees that while building capacity is a necessity for the future, local stations do not have the resources to nurture the talent that is essential to the long-term stability of native stations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support the Native Radio System as a medium of free expression for Indian Country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby support the Native Radio System and urges Congress to support and endorse continued funding for the Native Radio System through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the Winter Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wyndham Washington, D.C. on February 25, 2004 with a quorum present.

ATTEST:

Janet Nijl
Recording Secretary

Tom H. Kelly
President

Adopted by the Executive Council during the Winter Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Wyndham Washington, D.C. from February 23-25, 2004.