

**Testimony to the  
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
and Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Rick Schneider, President & CEO  
Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation**

**February 20, 2026**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and esteemed committee members:

I'm Rick Schneider, President & CEO of Maine Public, the state's public television and radio networks. It's always an honor to testify before you about our partnership with the Legislature and state government and we are grateful for your support.

I'm testifying today about Maine Public's inclusion in the Governor's supplemental budget. We're pleased that the Governor has proposed a modest addition for Maine Public, which is especially critical and welcome after the elimination of federal funding for public broadcasting.

Last July, Congress voted to claw back the federal funding that had already been appropriated for this fiscal year. This eliminated the standard annual appropriation that local public broadcasting stations have received – with bipartisan support in Congress – for almost 60 years.

That led to the shutdown of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the nonprofit who disbursed that funding to the local stations through Community Service Grants. With no more federal funding, there was no more reason for CPB to exist.

The impact on Maine Public was the loss of \$2.5 million dollars that was already planned for in this year's budget. While we can't ask the State to make up all of that, the amount in the supplemental budget of \$200,000 is extremely helpful in closing that gap.

Maine Public has been a self-standing nonprofit since 1992, and the State has provided annual appropriations since then. Maine Public uses the state funding to maintain and operate the broadcast infrastructure that covers our vast state, and that extensive transmission network exists to provide emergency public safety information as well as our educational and informational programming. **It is a vital and essential resource that the State has invested in for decades.**

Even with this supplemental funding, Maine Public's state support will be less than the level we were receiving in FY 2008, 18 years ago. In the meantime, our technical costs have increased, and our service to the State has grown with the addition of seven new radio signals in rural areas.

Per State Statute, our appropriation is intended to meet the cost of delivering broadcast and emergency alert services and maintaining our state network. State funding does not pay for programming, for which we do private fundraising.

**Again, this funding is about maintaining the decades-long investment that the State has made in a robust statewide public safety system and broadcast network.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I am happy to answer any questions. And thank you for the Legislature's support of Maine Public.