

November 28, 2011

To: Lindsey Facteau, Legislative Analyst
From: Alta DeLong, President, Board of Trustees, Prospect Free Library
Ref: *Hearing Standing Committee on Libraries and Education Technology*

Funding is a matter of great concern for very small libraries such as Prospect. We are a rural area 15 miles from larger libraries. We also have patrons who literally come down out of the mountains to use our facilities and computers. Libraries such as ours are a true haven. They offer a chance to dream, some company, or a place to escape. They serve as community centers. Through the NYS library systems, they can offer almost every library service.

At a time when other community services become fewer and fewer, especially in areas of small populations and some isolation, it would be folly to lose these libraries. The cuts in the state budget echo down the governemtn chain. Our county (Oneida) has cut their library budget to \$0. Prospect Village had forgiven our rent, but will no longer do that. Needless to say, our expenses increase and now we pay rent. We practice extreme fiscal prudence. Prospect would have no library if not for our volunteers, including those who serve on our Board of Trustees. Small rural libraries continue to give the best return for taxpayer money.

We continue to serve but at greater and greater peril. Libraries such as Prospect are in some ways even more necessary than in larger areas where many other resources are available. The saddest thing NYS could do would be to preside over the demise of her libraries. Please remember us in your funding plans.

Alta DeLong
President, Board of Trustees,
Prospect Free Library