



MEMORANDUM

Alaska Municipal League 2025 Resolutions Submitted for Member Action at the Annual Business Meeting in December.

Item Type: Action Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and City Council
Date: November 25, 2024
From: Councilmember Aderhold

The Alaska Municipal League membership discusses and votes on resolutions at the business meeting on December 13, 2024, following the annual meeting. Resolutions that pass represent the issues staff and board will focus on during the upcoming legislative session. In recent years, I have been the only Homer elected official to attend the board meeting and I have voted for or against resolutions (or not voted at all) based on my best understanding of how Homer City Council has discussed aspects of various issues represented in the resolutions.

A better way to understand the council's views on the resolutions is for the body to review the resolutions and discuss them during a regular meeting. So, attached, here they are for our review and discussion. This is the smallest number of resolutions I have seen since I started paying attention to these things. I've also attached the packet of past resolutions that are being carried forward because they remain relevant and current policy and position statements for your review and understanding (no discussion or vote needed on these).

Our discussion may include general discussion, amendments our body would like to see made to any of the resolutions, and guidance on how the body would like the Homer representative present at the meeting should vote on each resolution. Note that we submitted two of the five.

Recommendation:

Discuss and provide guidance on how the Homer representative at the business meeting should vote on each resolution



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

**Resolutions and
Policy & Positions Statement**

Passed by AML Membership

**Included in Consent Agenda
No Action: Recommended by Members**

Principles and Policy Statements

Alaska Municipal League

Approach

- Principles reflect long-standing commitments
- Policy Statements provide general guidance
- Resolutions call for direct and urgent action

Updates

- Reduce duplication
- Identify specifics as much as possible
- Active voice

Principles

- Ensure that policies of the state provide for maximum local self-government.
- Remove inequitable tax burdens and maintain local revenue authorities.
- Maintain and increase revenue sharing as an investment in and partnership with municipalities.
- Expect sufficient and inflation-proofed State funding for basic public needs and State obligations.
- Services that are delivered by local governments on behalf of the State should be fully funded by the State.
- Preserve the tax base of local governments.
- Provide resources and technical assistance that enhance the capacity of communities.

Policy Statements

Municipal Governance

- Oppose State management of municipal sales tax and the preemption of local rates and exemptions.
- Reimburse the value of all mandatory exemptions; or make these optional and/or needs-based.
- Increase the States capacity and competency for tax assessment and analysis.
- Reduce administrative burdens, including by removing paperwork and reporting requirements.
- Require that legislation includes a municipal and/or school district implementation impact and fiscal note.
- Expand municipal authorities and increased self-governance.
- Increase capacity-building for governance and financial management competency and capabilities.
- Accelerate the transfer of State lands to municipal governments; manage land bank for future boroughs.
- Foster municipal-Tribal collaboration.

Community Revenues and Fees

- Return Community Assistance annual distribution to \$60 million in FY26; increase according to inflation.
- Allow CAP to earn interest or investment returns.
- Adjust Community Assistance applications to be biannual based on good standing.
- Remove CIP requirement for applications.

- Ensure distribution of CAP funds, grants, pass-through funding, and other payments within 30 days.
- Reduce state agency fees applicable to municipal governance and school districts.
- Increase methods to waive debt, forgive loans, or otherwise bolster financially stressed communities.
- Reduce interest rate penalties found in AS 26.45.500(b) and other statutes to be consistent with market rates.

Public Employee Benefits

- Full State funding for State-mandated presumptions of compensability through the creation of a Presumption Trust.
- Reduce or remove costs associated with termination studies and late payment.
- Work actively to decrease the overall unfunded liability of PERS/TRS.
- Oppose any cost shift to local governments of the State's on-behalf payment (over 22%).
- Return to a defined benefit plan as a significant tool for recruitment and retention.
- Provide other tools that might contribute to greater employee benefits.
- Provide additional technical assistance to Tier 4 employees for long-term planning.
- Use fiscal year windfalls to decrease debt obligation for long-term sustainability.

Fiscal Policy

- Oppose cost-shifting of State expenses and programs to municipalities.
- Maintain an adequate level of essential State services.
- Develop a broad-based tax to increase State revenue, consistent with a budget that supports municipal and resident needs and fulfills statutory and Constitutional obligations.
- Inflation-proof statewide spending obligations, ensure sufficient and growing capital budget, and ensure that a spending cap does not disproportionately impact local governments and school districts.
- Continue to utilize a sustainable draw on earnings of the Alaska Permanent Fund.
- Maintain an investment and management strategy for PCE that results in appropriate capitalization of the PCE endowment and Community Assistance Fund.

Public Safety

- Increase State funding for municipal public safety obligations, including LEO training, operations of Community Jails, and prosecutors and public defenders.
- Increase tools available for public safety recruitment and retention, including sharing candidates and background checks.
- Strengthen rural public safety, including increasing VPSO presence, encouraging partnerships between municipal and Tribal governments, and providing pathways for greater local governance.
- Decrease access to and impacts from opioids and other substances and implement and strengthen local partnerships.
- Provide funding of the administrative costs of municipal hosting of E911 systems or explore statewide service and fee structure.
- Elevate input from local governments in emergency and resilience planning and ensure state budgets and policy supports adequate and timely state resources to support local emergency response.

- Decrease crime and reduce high rates of recidivism including education and substance abuse treatment.
- Increase funding for and development of Crisis Now programs.
- Increase funding for the Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) system, including the funds needed to upgrade to the latest hardware and software.

Economic Development

- Invest in and develop policy that increases funding for, access to, and affordability of childcare and housing.
- Increase investment in training and workforce development for residents.
- Provide resources for local economic development planning, including local economic diversification and small business development strategies.
- Provide State support to sustain local economies, improve quality of life, and reduce regulatory burdens.
- Support local control of licensing that contributes to economic activity, including that of alcohol, and reconsider State-level population limits that bypass local planning and zoning commission responsibilities.
- Increase direct connections to EDA, or otherwise be represented by regional economic or planning organizations.
- Increase responsible resource development and reduce investment barriers alongside improved environmental risk management.
- Maintain the authority of local governments to tax the extraction or production of local resources, including travel and tourism, for general purposes of government.
- Promote the adoption of PILT agreements to the extent that these promote resource development and meet local responsibilities to tax.
- Maintain the structure of the Oil & Gas Property Tax, to the extent that local rates are not reduced in any way.
- Increase compliance with bycatch regulations, including from trawlers in the Gulf, recognizing the broader impacts on resident access.

Infrastructure

- Provide resources and support for municipalities to better access grant opportunities, including to remove barriers of cost, timing, match, and complexity.
- Increase the availability of and funding for teacher and public safety housing.
- Support State middle-mile investments that improve access to affordable, high-speed broadband, and foster the establishment of regional or local broadband planning committees.
- Recognize and identify ways to address aging transportation, energy, and water/sewer infrastructure, including by offsetting operational or maintenance costs.
- Support short-term and long-term strategies for the development of broadband and cellular coverage in Alaska, and planning efforts thereof.
- Provide resources for community relocation, adaptation, and resilience efforts, and climate action plans.
- Increase the State capital budget to address deferred maintenance, including through mechanisms such as general obligation bonds.
- Provide technical assistance and investment in energy projects, processes and programs that decrease energy costs and improve access to renewables.
- Reimburse municipal debt or investments in energy including by utilizing PCE savings.

- Develop energy corridors and regional energy projects that facilitate grid resilience.
- Encourage adequate funding and use of the Renewable Energy Fund and AIDEA investments to promote renewable energy project developments.
- Ensure the sustainability of the ferry system, such that it maintains frequent, consistent, and reliable year-round ferry service.
- Oppose the transfer of maintenance responsibilities to municipalities as the requirement for road and airport projects.
- Enable the ability for locally delivered, federally funded project management by local governments.
- Waive DOT&PF ICAP rates on pass-through funding to local governments, including for transit programs.
- Appropriately fund ADF&G and increased investment in fisheries monitoring, research, impact analysis, and outreach.
- Continue investment in port and harbor infrastructure, and the development of an Alaska Ports Strategy.
- Fully fund (equal to municipal match commitments) the Harbor Matching Grant program.
- Take an active role in federal fisheries management, including bycatch, and clean water, including through transboundary negotiations.
- Reinstate the Municipal Matching Grant program to help municipalities match or supplement local and federal funding.
- Leverage federal funding to ensure that all communities with more than 25 residents have access to clean drinking water and sanitation.
- Provide State funding for improvements to and maintenance of facilities to comply with the Clean Water Act, including those facilities that need 301h waivers for 401 certification.
- Continue to invest in Village Safe Water and the State Revolving Loan Fund and expand outreach and utilization.
- Provide clean water to PFAS-affected communities, help communities manage solid waste impacted by PFAS, and clean up and remediate PFAS-contaminated sites.
- Fund a water and wastewater operator subsidy and support operator certification to increase the pool of qualified operators.

Education

- Adequately invest in early childhood education.
- Adequately invest in career and technical education to prepare, attract and retain qualified local educators.
- Support educational accountability and assessment that meets or exceeds federal requirements and maximizes local control.
- Increase and inflation-proof the BSA, consistent with higher costs experienced by school districts, including to consider and address drivers such as health care costs, fuel prices, and property insurance costs.
- Increase investment in school construction and deferred maintenance, including by providing a Base Facilitation Allocation.
- Increase implementation of charter school opportunities within the system of public education currently in place, including ensuring local school board approvals that reflect budget considerations and local investment.
- Oppose forced consolidation of school districts and support negotiated efficiencies of operation.

- Continue a well-funded school bond debt reimbursement program, including the annual and full distribution of the States reimbursement.
- Ensure the university system has adequate resources so that it is capable of delivering educational opportunities, vocational training, workforce development, and credible research.
- Support culturally relevant curriculum development responsive to local decision-making.
- Increase budget certainty for school districts and local governments, including through prompt payment, inflation-proofing formula funds, and avoiding delayed budget decisions.

Resolution #2019-03 A resolution in support of the development of a Community Dividend.

WHEREAS, community revenue sharing began in 1969 to help ease fiscal problems facing local governments, stabilize or reduce local property taxes, encourage local provision of public services, and stabilize local budgets and planning; and

WHEREAS, revenue sharing has undergone significant and dramatic changes since 1969, leading to a situation in 2004 where all revenue sharing programs were proposed for elimination after years of reductions, which corresponded to increased property taxes, elimination of municipal services, and reduced capacity; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska exempts itself from local taxes even though it uses local services and approximately \$1.6 billion (2023) in property taxes are paid by local taxpayers to subsidize State operations; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League has been firm in its advocacy for the absolute necessity of a form of and enough revenue sharing that strengthens the capacity of municipal governments, alleviates the need for higher local taxes, and bolsters the delivery of public services; and

WHEREAS, the recent fiscal crisis experienced by the State of Alaska made apparent the reality of cost-shifting to municipalities and the potential for State reductions to municipal budgets, particularly in the form of reduced or eliminated revenue sharing; and,

WHEREAS, uncertainty at the State level – due either to limits to annual appropriations or the mechanism by which current Community Assistance funding is currently secured – necessitates a new way to approach revenue sharing; and

WHEREAS a community dividend is a feasible method with which to reimburse local government for State tax exemptions, fund local contributions to education, replace revenue sharing or community assistance, and keep Alaska's promises;

WHEREAS, the earnings from the Alaska Permanent Fund are a credible and sustainable vehicle for such funding; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Legislature considered this question in 2006, with support from many stakeholders, including the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, a community dividend meets the State's obligation to municipal governments and provides a sustainable pathway for maximizing local government.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the Alaska State Legislature to consider the development of a Community Dividend.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 16, 2018.

Resolution #2019-04 A resolution requesting that the Alaska State Legislature fund the Senior Citizen's/Disabled Veteran's property tax exemption as required in AS 29.45.030(g).

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, the State of Alaska imposed a mandate that required all municipalities that levy a property tax, to exempt the first \$150,000 value of primary homes belonging to seniors and disabled veterans, from that property tax; and

WHEREAS, property tax exemptions raise the property tax liability to those individuals who do not receive the benefits of those exemptions; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska also passed law in statute that requires the State to reimburse municipalities for those exemptions; and

WHEREAS, the State and Legislature have not funded this program and the municipal reimbursement since 1997; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has continued to require municipal exemptions; and

WHEREAS, one of the primary duties of a municipality is to levy taxes in support of its corresponding obligations to provide public services, and most importantly public education; and

WHEREAS, municipalities have the best understanding of citizen concerns and priorities, municipal budgets and should have sole authority to identify the need for and grant exemptions; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance provided to 164 municipalities has decreased to \$30 million per year, the Senior Citizen's/Disabled Veteran's Property Tax exemption is now costing the 18 municipalities that levy a property tax a total of over \$105 million per year (2023).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests that the Alaska State Legislature fund the Senior Citizen's/Disabled Veteran's Property Tax exemption as required in AS 29.45.030(g).

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 16, 2018.

Resolution #2019-06 A resolution supporting legislation adopting real property sales disclosure in Alaska.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League supports the goal to promote the fair and equitable distribution of the property tax burden which funds local governments; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans, municipalities, and the State benefit from the assessment of fair and equitable values of real property within all taxing jurisdictions in the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, an assessor is required, per AS 29.45.110, to assess all property at full and true value, as of January 1 of the assessment year. The full and true value is the estimated price that the property would bring in an open market and under the then prevailing market conditions in a sale between a willing seller and a willing buyer both conversant with the property and with prevailing general price levels; and

WHEREAS, while the legal mandate for assessment at full and true value exists, the sales data that is necessary to determine full and true value is not readily available due to the lack of sales disclosure in the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Research Services Division reports that Alaska is one of six states for which sales disclosure for property exchanges are not disclosed; and

WHEREAS, data is currently obtained from requests for voluntary sales information through questionnaires mailed in many jurisdictions, which result in incomplete, unreliable, and in some cases translated to inaccurate reflections of actual market value; and

WHEREAS, sales disclosure would assist in the fair distribution of the tax burden to all taxpayers and would enhance the accuracy and the timeliness of assessments; and

WHEREAS, sales disclosure would enhance the ability of assessment professionals to meet the full and true value mandate and would also aid the public in obtaining information in order to interact within local real estate markets; and

WHEREAS, the lack of sales data in some jurisdictions limits the ability to fairly distribute the tax burden and also to fund local services; and

WHEREAS, sales disclosure would enable property owners to gather data to provide support for legally entitled property tax appeals under AS 29.45.190; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has preempted the authority of municipal governments to tax real estate transfers, ensuring that the data made available by mandatory disclosure cannot be used to tax property owners.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League urges the Alaska State Legislature to enact legislation requiring disclosures of all real property sales in the State of Alaska.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 16, 2018.

Resolution #2019-08 A resolution supporting the State's implementation of a broad-based tax.

WHEREAS, in response to a fiscal crisis caused by low oil prices and other circumstances, the State of Alaska has made significant headway in decreasing the overall size of government by reducing agency and programmatic spending; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the Alaska State Legislature took a positive step toward addressing additional revenue by allowing access to excess earning of the Permanent Fund; and

WHEREAS, there remains a gap between revenues and current expenses, and an even more significant gap between revenues and the ability of the State to address fundamental challenges facing Alaska, including but not limited to public safety, education, infrastructure, and energy; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League in 2016 submitted a Sustainability Plan to the Legislature, some of which has been addressed;

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League has supported the implementation of a broad-based tax as part of a sustainable fiscal plan; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League understands an income tax as being able to capture revenue from out- of-state employees, which is 20% of Alaska's total payroll, is least regressive, and give Alaskans a direct interest in state governance; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League believes that a statewide sales tax would 1) be feasible where no current sales tax exists, but 2) may erode the municipal tax base, thereby shifting revenue from one level of government to another, while undercutting the ability of local governments to deliver essential services; and

WHEREAS, municipalities across Alaska have identified continued challenges related to increased expenses and community needs; and

WHEREAS, municipalities across Alaska are concerned that lack of revenue at the State level will result in the inability to address essential public services that are important to Alaskans and to Alaskan businesses.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the State's consideration of a broad-based tax; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League stands ready to work with the Alaska State Legislature to mitigate potential negative impacts, as necessary.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 16, 2018.

Resolution #2019-09 A resolution requesting that Title 29 be amended to remove the audit requirement for Community Assistance, and provide a one-time waiver of past audit requirements, thereby releasing all outstanding Community Revenue Sharing/Assistance funds.

WHEREAS, Alaska's municipal governments consider community revenue sharing, now known as Community Assistance, an essential and fundamental component of their annual budget; and

WHEREAS, municipalities are diverse and wide-ranging in their population size, budget composition, and state and federal statutory and regulatory requirements; and

WHEREAS, AS 29.180.020 outlines the requirements necessary to receive Community Assistance funding, including, "if the municipality is a borough, unified municipality, or first-class city, a copy of the annual audit reviewed by a certified public accountant"; and

WHEREAS, the cost of completing an audit consistent with this requirement may represent 30- 50% of the annual funding received by a municipality from Community Assistance; and

WHEREAS, the bulk of these municipalities are already required to complete an audit based on other state and federal funding requirements, and submission to DCRA can be encouraged; and

WHEREAS, for the remainder, the audit requirement presents an additional bureaucratic burden that requires municipal governments to allocate funding to its fulfillment and away from delivery of services in the public benefit; and

WHEREAS, there are more effective and cost-efficient ways in which to assure DCRA of a community's overall health and compliance capabilities; and

WHEREAS, the State has withheld and currently withholds payment of Community Revenue Sharing and now Community Assistance when the audit requirement, among others, is not met; and

WHEREAS, many municipalities are desperately in need of access to those funds, which assist in general operations, strengthening administrative capacity, and contributing to education, energy and public safety needs; and

WHEREAS, alleviating the costs of compliance for municipal governments increases overall the economic health of the state, decreases the need for increased local taxes, and reduces programmatic costs within the State.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests that the Alaska State Legislature amend Title 29 to remove the audit requirement for Community Assistance, and provide a one-time waiver of past audit requirements, thereby releasing all outstanding Community Revenue Sharing/Assistance funds.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 16, 2018.

Resolution #2020-01 A resolution encouraging the Legislature to meet as the Assembly of the Unorganized Borough, and to take up its governance as required by the Constitution.

WHEREAS, Article 10 of the State Constitution describes one purpose of the State as to provide for maximum local self-government with a minimum of local government units, and to prevent duplication of tax-levying jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, furthermore, Article 10 requires that the entire state be divided into organized and unorganized boroughs; and

WHEREAS, Article 10 dictates the responsibility of the Legislature to function as the assembly of unorganized boroughs, including to allow maximum local participation and responsibility, and to exercise any power or function of an organized borough; and

WHEREAS, the fundamental responsibilities of an organized borough are to provide for planning and platting, education, and taxation; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has not operated in its history as an assembly of the unorganized borough, nor fully taken up those responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, it can be argued that while the Legislature has delegated responsibility for planning to various state agencies and education to the Department of Education, there remains the issue of taxation; and

WHEREAS, it is a principle of the Alaska Municipal League that the state should not compel organization; and

WHEREAS, it is clearly the responsibility of the Legislature to address 1) the number of unorganized boroughs, consistent with common interests, and 2) education, planning and taxation within the unorganized boroughs; and

WHEREAS, acting in this capacity provides a meaningful and transparent process to maximize local participation and responsibility.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the Legislature to meet as the Assembly of the Unorganized Borough, and to take up its governance as required by the Constitution.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2020-04 A resolution opposing any increase to the required minimum local contribution or decreases to State funding levels; removing the maximum local contribution allowable; and considering Impact Aid as part of the local contribution.

WHEREAS, public education is a State obligation included in Article 7 of the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the State delegates some of its responsibility to local governments, including education powers – and funding roles – to all boroughs, and home rule and first-class cities; and

WHEREAS, education is one of the largest State budget items, and is by far the largest budget item for those local governments with education powers; and

WHEREAS, as part of the funding formula designed by the State, a minimum local contribution of 2.65 mils (or equivalent) is required; and

WHEREAS, many local governments contribute beyond what is required, but at least nine contribute below 4 mils; and

WHEREAS, increases to the local contribution will mean trade-offs for each local government, who must choose between increasing taxes and decreased spending on other essential programs, including public safety and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, five local governments currently fund their schools to the cap (2023), and should be given the opportunity to contribute as they wish, consistent with local control; and

WHEREAS, federal Impact Aid is distributed to school districts by the U.S. Dept. of Education to make up for the loss of property tax revenue due to tax-exempt federal property, and to compensate them for continued provision of education for federally connected children; and

WHEREAS, the State considers Impact Aid part of its contribution to education, and if it were counted as part of the local contribution, local spending on education would increase from 40% to 53% of what the State spends overall; and

WHEREAS, instead of shifting the cost of education – and the State’s responsibilities – to local governments, the State should give greater flexibility to local governments to give as they are able, even as the State ensures adequate levels of funding.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League opposes any increase to the required local contribution for education funding or reductions to the adequacy of State funding of education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League supports removing the cap on local government contributions and counting Federal Impact Aid as part of the local government contribution.

Updated December 2023.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2020-06 A resolution in support of economic, resource and infrastructure development that benefits local governments, the State of Alaska, and Alaska residents.

WHEREAS, the Act of Statehood was only granted to Alaska in 1959, after the commercial discovery of oil led Congress to finally vote in favor of Alaska's statehood, believing that the State could have a healthy economy through development of its natural resources; and

WHEREAS, Alaska depends on responsible development of its natural resources to expand and support its economy, and the right to taxation of the reserved value and production of those resources is reserved to the State; and

WHEREAS, Article VIII of our State constitution mandates that Alaska develop its resources to the maximum benefit of all Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, those benefits include thousands of family wage jobs in Alaska, contributions to two-thirds of the Alaskan economy, as much as ninety percent of State general fund revenues; and

WHEREAS, State revenue contributes to State responsibilities, including public education, the university, public welfare, and public health; and

WHEREAS, in some communities, resource development is the sole or major contributor to local government, providing needed government services to area residents; and

WHEREAS, infrastructure development enables effective resource production and reduces the transaction costs of development; and

WHEREAS, investments by and collaboration between the State, local and federal governments, alongside industry, contribute to infrastructure development, and economic development more broadly; and

WHEREAS, that partnership enables not only continued and new responsible resource development to occur, but makes possible new and different economic development opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's local governments are committed to strengthening the relationships they have with oil and gas, mining, fishing, timber, and tourism industries.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports economic, resource and infrastructure development that benefits local governments, the State of Alaska, and Alaska residents.

Resolution #2020-08 A resolution encouraging the State of Alaska to develop a plan to transfer authority to accept federal funds from the State directly to local governments or their designee.

WHEREAS, approximately \$60 million is transferred annually from the Federal government to the State for distribution to local governments; and

WHEREAS, the State collects about \$80 million annually in taxes on local economic activity that have revenue sharing statutes attached to them; and

WHEREAS, the nearly \$150 million in funds held by the State for distribution to local governments accrues interest earnings that are not added to the amounts available for distribution; and

WHEREAS, PILT funding of nearly \$33 million and Secure Rural Schools funding (within the Unorganized Borough) represents examples of federal funding for local governments that unnecessarily goes to the State for distribution; and

WHEREAS, the Community Assistance funding is formula-driven, similar to calculations made for PCE distribution; and

WHEREAS, Shared Fish Taxes, Aviation Motor Fuels Tax, and the Commercial Vessel Passenger Tax all represent examples of taxes collected by the State but with Statutes that direct some portion to be shared with local governments; and

WHEREAS, hundreds of millions of dollars of funding that will ultimately be distributed to local governments rests with the State for anywhere between three and six months; and

WHEREAS, in an environment of fiscal austerity, fund and grant management should be considered an area where the State can reduce its footprint; and

WHEREAS, local governments have the capacity, individually or collectively, to effectively manage these funds and their reporting; and

WHEREAS, reducing the State's role as middleman is one way in which to right size state government even as the State strengthens local governments.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the State of Alaska to develop a plan to transfer authority to accept federal funds from the State directly to local governments or their designee.

Updated December 2023.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2020-09 A resolution supporting the effort to maximize local self-government, respect local control, and encourage the State to provide funding for the adoption of powers and incorporation, including borough formation where feasible.

WHEREAS, Alaska's Article 10 on local government requires the State to provide for maximum local self-government (with a minimum of local government units and to prevent duplication of tax-levying jurisdictions); and

WHEREAS, the context within which this was written included examples from other states of multiple tax-levying entities with overlapping authority, from school districts to cities and utilities; and

WHEREAS, the State has kept its framework for local government fairly straightforward, with classes of cities and boroughs that have non-duplicative responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, there remain numerous communities that have not incorporated, including within the Unorganized Borough, which itself remains unincorporated; and

WHEREAS, AML has prioritized over its history a principle of local control, which should be understood as the belief that State government should not direct or restrict municipal decision-making; and

WHEREAS, local control is different than a community's interest in incorporating as a city or a region as a borough; and

WHEREAS, in fact, an unincorporated city or borough is ceding local control for State management, and depriving residents of maximum local self-government; and

WHEREAS, one role of the State may be to incentivize incorporation or organization of the city and borough, including to encourage and provide resources for the adoption of additional powers; and

WHEREAS, municipal governments in Alaska provide important services to residents, including public safety, education, public infrastructure, and quality of life programs; and

WHEREAS, during periods of fiscal uncertainty, active and healthy local governments can provide the backstop on loss of services and continue to maintain community and economic development.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the effort to maximize local self-government, respect local control, and encourage the State to provide additional resources for the adoption of powers and incorporation, including borough formation where feasible.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2020-10 A resolution supporting reform of the USDA Forest Service Secure Rural Schools program to include long-term certainty and sustainability of funding.

WHEREAS, A March 2017 Report by the Congressional Research Service confirmed 61% of all land (224.2 Million Acres) in Alaska is owned by the federal government; 57% (129 Million Acres) of which is managed by agencies with preservation and conservation of land as core mission components, and will likely never be available for development; and

WHEREAS, the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act (SRS) was enacted in 2000 to financially assist counties with public, tax-exempt forestlands; and

WHEREAS, critical services at the county level have historically been funded in part with a 25 percent share of timber receipts from federal U.S. Forest Service lands and a 50 percent share of timber receipts from federal Oregon and California Grant Lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management; and

WHEREAS, as those revenues have fallen or fluctuated due to reduced timber harvest and market forces, SRS payments helped bridge the gap to keep rural schools open, provide road maintenance, support search and rescue efforts and other essential county services; and

WHEREAS, since enacted in 2000, SRS has provided more than \$7 billion in payments to more than 700 counties and 4,400 school districts in more than 40 states to fund schools and essential services like roads and public safety; and

WHEREAS, local governments in Alaska use the SRS funding to supplement transportation funding, and school operations and capital project needs; and

WHEREAS, the elimination of SRS would have an immediate and detrimental effect on the school system and on local transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, local governments who experienced the loss of these funds would be faced with choices of increased taxes or the loss of jobs, including at schools; and

WHEREAS, a short-term solution for SRS should result in continued funding over the next two years, and a long-term fix must account for the sustainability of the program; and

WHEREAS, a sustainable program may include funding features such as a forest visitor fee, or consolidation within the PILT formula, as an additional factor, or may require a large set-aside that produces a return of sustainable revenue over time.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports reform of the USDA Forest Service Secure Rural Schools program to include long-term certainty and sustainability of funding.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2020-11 A resolution in support of reform of the PILT funding formula to extend multipliers to smaller population counties (boroughs), and permanently authorizing the program.

WHEREAS, through the federal PILT payment, the Department of Interior provides revenue to counties and county equivalents, such as boroughs, to compensate for nontaxable federal acreage within their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, in Alaska, PILT funding is distributed not only to boroughs but also to cities within the unorganized borough, and in 2023 was valued at \$35,448,677; and

WHEREAS, many Alaska boroughs and cities fund the provision of fire and emergency medical response services to the federal lands and infrastructure as well as providing other services, such as solid waste, public safety, and transportation; and

WHEREAS, the numerous nightly camping and lodging offerings located on federal lands are exempt from local taxation; and

WHEREAS, while the annual number of visitors to these federal lands number over 2,920,250, according to the National Park Service, PILT payments are calculated on the local government's year round population, which in many cases can be fewer than 2,000 residents; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties (NACo) has found that the current PILT formula places counties and boroughs with populations under 5,000 in an unfavorable position in relation to counties with populations greater than 5,000; and

WHEREAS, at their Annual Conference in July 2018, NACo adopted a resolution titled "Resolution on Amendments to PILT Population Caps"; and

WHEREAS, this resolution "supports amending the PILT formula to extend the population multipliers to include additional multipliers for local governments with populations in the range 4,000, 3,000, 2,000 and 1,000"; and

WHEREAS, this amendment increases total PILT funding for numerous Alaska local governments; and

WHEREAS, changes to the PILT formula will strengthen the capacity for partnerships that develop at the local level, it will improve the local government's ability to support tourism and access within federal lands, and it will increase community and economic development.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Alaska Municipal League supports reform of the PILT funding formula to extend multipliers to smaller population counties (boroughs), including through federal legislation as that addressed within the Small County PILT Parity Act; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AML supports permanent reauthorization of the PILT program.

Updated December 2023

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2020-14 A resolution opposing any State action that would diminish the ability of local governments to tax or receive a share of State tax on local economic activity.

WHEREAS, actions by the State to eliminate or reduce the sharing of taxes on local economic activity threatens the sustainability of cities and boroughs in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Petroleum Property Tax recognizes the value of oil and gas property, the benefits to industry of offering this tax credit, and that the State already collects royalty and production taxes on oil and gas development; and

WHEREAS, local governments should benefit from that taxable property, avoid duplicate taxes on the oil and gas industry, and invest in public infrastructure that supports continued development; and

WHEREAS, the revenue from the Petroleum Property Tax is a fundamental component of the budgets of those who receive it, including more than 80% of some; and

WHEREAS, the Shared Fish Tax, similarly, works to avoid duplicate taxes on industry and provides revenue that local governments can use to improve local infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, moreover, the Statutes providing for the Shared Fish Tax actually allow for 100% to be shared, beyond the 50%, indicating full recognition of the value this revenue has for local governments; and

WHEREAS, there are many other arrangements whereby the State collects a tax on local economic activity and shares it with local governments; and

WHEREAS, sharing of that revenue reflects a partnership between the State and local government that predates Statehood; and

WHEREAS, local governments object to the scale and scope of the State's actions, the time available in which to respond, and the lack of negotiation; and

WHEREAS, local governments understand the fiscal challenges facing the State, but that State sustainability cannot come at the expense of local governments.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League opposes any State action that would diminish the ability of local governments to tax or receive a share of State tax on local economic activity.

Resolution #2020-16 A resolution opposing any further reductions to Community Assistance and in support of an appropriation to the Community Assistance Fund that would bring the Fund total back up to \$90 million.

WHEREAS, the veto of \$30 million to recapitalizing the Community Assistance Fund directly affects the operations of local governments by reducing the formula-driven distribution in FY24 by a third; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance (known formerly as Community Revenue Sharing) represents a decades-long partnership between local governments and the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, that partnership is a recognition of the State's retention of royalty and production rights on resource development, that local tax bases would not be able otherwise to ensure operations, and the need to deliver essential public services outside of State government; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance has seen continued degradation over the years, including in the last five by 50%, or if measured from FY20 to FY85 and adjusting for inflation, the value of Community Assistance should be 984% greater than it currently is; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance represents as much as 80% of some local government budgets, and for 100 communities greater than 20%; and

WHEREAS, when Community Assistance was zeroed out in the early 2000s, 14 local governments ceased day- to-day operations; and

WHEREAS, the formula of the Community Assistance Fund determines the annual payment to communities, with a payout of a third of available funds; and

WHEREAS, by not recapitalizing the fund, the payment to local governments will be reduced from \$30 million in FY23 to \$20 million in FY24.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League opposes any reductions to Community Assistance and supports an appropriation to the Community Assistance Fund that would bring the Fund total back up to \$90 million.

Resolution #2020-17 A resolution supporting Amendments to AS 29.45.500 to Require Municipalities to Pay Reasonable Interest on Tax Refunds.

WHEREAS, Alaska Statute 29.45.500 requires municipalities to pay interest on certain taxes it refunds to taxpayers, including taxes refunded after “a remittance by a taxpayer through error”; and

WHEREAS, the statute presently requires municipalities to pay interest fixed at 8%; and

WHEREAS, 8% is not presently a market interest rate, and is grossly excessive to fairly compensate taxpayers for the lost time-value of money; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the fact that market interest rates fluctuate, the Alaska State Legislature has in other circumstances, such as for pre-judgment interest awarded in lawsuits under AS 09.30.070, tied interest rates to the “12th Federal Reserve District discount rate in effect on January 2 of the year”; and

WHEREAS, interest required to be paid by municipalities to taxpayers should likewise be tied to a market index; and

WHEREAS, municipalities should not be required to pay non-market interest rates when refunding taxes it receives from taxpayers due to an error of the taxpayer (and not of the municipality).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports an amendment to AS 29.45.500 to require municipalities to pay interest at a reasonable, market- based rate in circumstances where it is required to pay interest on tax refunds.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 22, 2019.

Resolution #2021-01 A resolution in support of a legislative process that recognizes local governments as inherent partners in the delivery of State objectives.

WHEREAS, there are 165 incorporated city and borough governments in Alaska, acting as political subdivisions of the State; and

WHEREAS, through Constitutional and statutory authority, local governments have the State's powers and responsibility to tax and deliver services in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, there is no formal mechanism for local governments to contribute to the development of the Governor's budget, wherein agencies, OMB, and the Governor develop budgets that directly impact local governments but without their input; and

WHEREAS, throughout a legislative session, local government officials are directed to provide input as part of the "public" comment process; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has committees in the Senate and House that are dedicated to Community and Regional Affairs, but are potentially underutilized in developing an agenda that helps the Legislature understand the condition of communities; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's office often has a dedicated staff member acting as their lead for local governments relations, but the equivalent does not exist within the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, local government leaders are in a good position to contribute meaningfully to policy development and budget decisions, understanding both impact and local variation.

NOW, THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED that AML recommends that:

- Legislative leadership name Committee members or staff that will serve as local government liaisons, assisting in sharing local government information with legislators as appropriate; and
- A joint session of the Legislature be called to have addressed each year the Condition of Communities; and
- In cooperation with AML, the House and Senate Community and Regional Affairs committee chairs, and other Committee chairs as appropriate, establish a session and/or interim agenda that provides legislators, agencies, and the public with greater awareness of local government issues; and
- The Legislature establish a dedicated opportunity for local government contributions as part of all committee processes, prior to and outside the public comment process, including as a more formal component of invited testimony.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-03 A resolution in support of State policy and budget development that reflects a sustainable draw from the Permanent Fund's Earnings Reserve.

WHEREAS, the State has undergone significant and continuing fiscal challenges for at least the last five years; and

WHEREAS, deficit spending has contributed to loss of emergency reserves once found within the Constitutional Budget Reserve and Statutory Budget Reserve, both of which are at this point depleted; and

WHEREAS, of general fund revenues, competing priorities result in increased potential for the State to incur reductions to core programs that local governments and residents depend on; and

WHEREAS, those same budgetary pressures increase the likelihood the State may choose to shift costs to local governments, hoping that they will pick up the State's obligations; and

WHEREAS, lawmakers have a range of appropriation powers and tools at their disposal to meet this fiscal challenge; and

WHEREAS, one of the available options to lawmakers are the uncommitted funds held within the Earning Reserve Account (ERA), estimated to be approximately \$1.1 billion (October 2024); and

WHEREAS, the funds are accessible to lawmakers through a simple majority vote, though we understand that for every \$1 billion in funds drawn down today, the result is \$50 million less available in future years; and

WHEREAS, it may be tempting to utilize these funds for short-term needs, outside the current structure of a 5% POMV draw that makes available sustainable revenue to fund the State's obligations; and

WHEREAS, an unstructured draw has the potential to destabilize future budgets, pushes challenges to and impacts future generations, and leaves unresolved the many critical needs related to public health and welfare, public safety and education, and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, while conditions have continued to deteriorate such that the State's fiscal situation is increasingly dire and additional solutions need to be presented as viable options, it remains critical that the State identify the means by which it addresses these issues; and

WHEREAS, a sustainable draw is a component of a sustainable State fiscal policy that includes revenues and expenditures that have been balanced, emergency reserves replenished, and a fund balance established.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML commends to the Governor and Legislature support for State policy and budget development that reflects a sustainable draw from the Permanent Fund's Earnings Reserve.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-06 A resolution supporting a statewide comprehensive Alaska health initiative.

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is facing a billion-dollar budget deficit and is examining ways to balance the State's budget and reduce state spending; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska faces a public health crisis, which is requiring extensive scaling up of the public health infrastructure in response; and

WHEREAS, there is the potential for leveraging increased public health capacity to meet additional needs of Alaskans, which may contribute as well to addressing State and local government costs; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska currently has some of the highest per capita rates of substance abuse and tobacco use in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has some of the highest rates of domestic violence, sexual assault, suicide, child abuse and neglect, accidental death rates, obesity and sexually transmitted diseases in the nation; and

WHEREAS, data from the 2023 Alaska Kids Count Report ranks Alaska 38th in the nation for children's well-being based on 16 benchmarks related to quality of life, 27th in the nation for health, 48th in the nation for education, and 46th in the nation for economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, children who experience abuse or neglect are approximately nine times more likely to become involved in criminal activity, thus burdening the legal and prison systems than children who do not experience child abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's public health crisis impacts almost all state department operations and budgets, costs the State of Alaska millions of dollars every year, and damages the state's economy by limiting productive contributions that healthier citizens could have made; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has made attempts to combat some of these public health challenges but success may depend on a more coordinated and intensive approach; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska should identify ways in which a comprehensive state-wide public health initiative could be paid for, with an appropriate return on that investment; and

WHEREAS, substantially reducing the State of Alaska's public health issues will reduce the need for programs and services and result in significant cost savings to the State.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League supports a comprehensive statewide healthy Alaska initiative that aims to leverage current investments in the public health infrastructure to substantially reduce our public health issues and reduce the state's operating budget as programs and services are no longer needed to address preventable problems.

Updated December 2023.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-07 A resolution requesting renewed State support and increased funding for local emergency planning committees and preparedness.

WHEREAS, the State has a long history of providing support for local emergency preparedness; and

WHEREAS, local preparedness contributes to the ability of the State to respond effectively in the case of a crisis; and

WHEREAS, State support has come in the form of technical resources, as well as financial aid that helps local governments form and sustain local emergency planning committees; and

WHEREAS, the State had conducted some of this collaboration through DMVA's Local Emergency Planning Committees; and

WHEREAS, in FY19 the State funded LEPCs at \$298,500, in FY20 all of the LEPC funding of \$225,000 was vetoed from the State's budget, and in FY20 eliminated from the budget entirely; and

WHEREAS, the justification for those reductions note that "communities can apply for grants through other sources including DCCED and the federal government" and that "the State's fiscal reality dictates a reduction in expenditures;" and

WHEREAS, many local governments were unable to sustain LEPCs on their own, and were not able to identify grants corresponding to this need, while others saw their preparedness reduced dramatically; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 public health emergency highlighted challenges related to these gaps, wherein lack of funding resulted in a less effective response than could otherwise have been in place; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's public safety and health are dependent on strong public institutions that are able to 1) communicate local, on the ground information to state and federal decision makers, 2) engage with and partner at the State and federal level; and 3) assist in implementing state and federal guidance; and

WHEREAS, while recognizing the State's fiscal reality, the COVID-19 public health emergency and economic crisis, 2019 earthquakes and fire season, and future emergencies necessitate capacity at the local level that assists in the State response; and

WHEREAS, the State investment in local planning efforts saves the State time and funding later during an actual emergency, as systems are in place to coordinate response.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML requests renewed State support and increasing funding for local emergency planning committees and preparedness.

Updated December 2023.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-08 A resolution in support of a balanced approach to addressing the State of Alaska's deficit and continuing fiscal challenges.

WHEREAS, in 2016 AML presented a Sustainability Plan as the result of a year's worth of Committee work, and carefully evaluating the options at the time; and

WHEREAS, the Plan included creation of the POMV, changes to the PFD formula, broad based taxes, and additional revenue measures; and since then, the POMV has been implemented and some small reductions have been made to expenditures; and

WHEREAS, while the level of State spending on State government has remained about the same, much of its savings have been achieved by cost-shifting to local governments; and

WHEREAS, since 2016 the State has spent down almost the entirety of its savings and there are few options remaining that don't include broad based revenue measures, use of the remaining funds that have been held within the Earnings Reserve account, additional cost- shifting, or dramatic reductions to spending; and

WHEREAS, as local government officials who similarly have to make hard choices in balancing local budgets, our members recognize the inherent challenges, fraught politics, and social and economic impacts; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's cities and boroughs – as political subdivisions of the State – depend on a State government that has the resources available to deliver its Constitutional and statutory obligations, including in partnership with local governments; and

WHEREAS, the deterioration of the State's fiscal condition materially threatens the sustainability of local governments in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's residents, businesses, and local governments expect action by the Governor and Legislature that balance the State's budget using the myriad tools of government – right-sizing programs, broad-based taxation, and strategic spending; and a balanced approach is crucial and will require reexamination of current approaches.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML supports a balanced approach to addressing the State of Alaska's deficit and continuing fiscal challenges, including by addressing the following:

- Broad-based taxation (personal and corporate income, sales, and property)
- Additional revenue measures tied to use (motor fuel, marijuana, tobacco, alcohol) or resource
- A stable PFD formula consistent with a sustainable draw from the Earnings Reserve.
- Potential reductions to the State budget irrespective of fund source
- Negotiating solutions to devolve responsibilities, and foster public-private partnerships

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AML suggests the following criteria be used in evaluating the efficacy of these options:

- The effective date of broad-based taxation should be consistent with economic recovery, including to phase in over time – these programs take time to implement
- Social and economic modeling should accompany individual options and the combination of options, with consideration given to the impact on the tax base, equity, and distribution

- Local governments are diverse in their ability to sustain cost-shifting or cuts, and that variability will need to be taken into account
- Negotiated solutions are different than unfunded mandates, and must include a level of funding that can be leveraged at the local level

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-09 A resolution in support of increased funding for community and regional jails, and a base level of funding for Village Police Officers.

WHEREAS, Alaska has a unified court system, and the criminal justice system is the obligation of the State; and

WHEREAS, local governments have the option to adopt police powers, with more than 70 having done so; and local law enforcement enforces State and municipal law; and

WHEREAS, the State has separated local law enforcement into two classes, one of which is Village Police Officers (VPOs), who have different training requirements than other public safety professionals in the state, but very similar responsibilities to other local law enforcement, and more responsibility than Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs) who received more training; and

WHEREAS, the State invests \$14 million in the VPSO program (2023), a necessary component of the overall public safety system in Alaska, for about the same number of officers as VPOs, which it contributes nothing to; and

WHEREAS, increasing public attention on public safety, including recruitment and retention, hiring practices and training, performance and outcomes, and operations, necessitates an increased level of commitment to and investment in these systems; and

WHEREAS, at the same time, 15 local governments provide community and regional jails on behalf of the State's criminal justice system; and these jails are an integral part of local and state law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, State funding for community and regional jails was static for seven years is still below FY15 levels in 2023; and in many cases, State funding is only 50% of the full cost of managing the jail on the State's behalf, and in all cases deficient; and

WHEREAS, if local governments are to effectively deliver public safety in Alaska, then the State must better contribute to their ability to do so; and

WHEREAS, additional State investment is needed to improve and adjust to the demands of these roles, to attract and retain qualified officers, and to expand training and preparedness.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML calls on the Governor and Legislature to fully fund community and regional jails, requiring at least an additional \$5 million more than the \$14 million currently budgeted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding should be appropriated in support of Village Police Officers, to include at least coverage of police professional liability insurance, travel for training and training expenses, and a base level of pay, the estimated total of which will represent half of what the State invests in the VPSO program.

Updated December 2023.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-11 A resolution in support of full funding for the State of Alaska Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program in the FY26 State Capital Budget.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the majority of the public boat harbors in Alaska where constructed by the State during the 1960s and 1970s; and

WHEREAS, these harbor facilities represent critical transportation links and are the transportation hubs for waterfront commerce and economic development in Alaskan coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, these harbor facilities are ports of refuge and areas for protection for ocean-going vessels and fishermen throughout the State of Alaska, especially in coastal Alaskan communities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska over the past nearly 30 years has transferred ownership of most of these State- owned harbors, many of which were at or near the end of their service life at the time of transfer, to local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities took over this important responsibility even though they knew that these same harbor facilities were in poor condition at the time of transfer due to the state's failure to keep up with deferred maintenance; and

WHEREAS, consequently, when local municipal harbormasters formulated their annual harbor facility budgets, they inherited a major financial burden that their local municipal governments could not afford; and

WHEREAS, in response to this financial burden, the Governor and the Alaska Legislature passed legislation in 2006, supported by the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators, to create the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant program, AS 29.60.800; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League is pleased with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities administrative process to review, score and rank applicants to the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program, since state funds may be limited; and

WHEREAS, for each harbor facility grant application, these municipalities have committed to invest 100% of the design and permitting costs and 50% of the construction cost; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities of Sitka, Whittier and Juneau have committed to contribute half of their project cost in local match funding for FY2025 towards harbor projects of significant importance locally as required in the Harbor Facility Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, completion of these harbor facility projects is all dependent on the 50% match from the State of Alaska's Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, during the last fifteen years the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program has only been fully funded twice; and

WHEREAS, a survey done by the Alaska Municipal League of Alaska's ports and harbors found that from the respondents, the backlog of projects necessary to repair and replace former State-owned harbors has increased to at least \$500,000,000; and

WHEREAS, given that Alaska is a maritime state and that our harbors are foundational to both our way of life and the economy of this great State it is in the public's best interest to maintain this critical

infrastructure by using State, Local, and Federal funds to recapitalize the crucial harbor moorage infrastructure statewide.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League urges full funding by the Governor and the Alaska Legislature for the State of Alaska's Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program in the FY 2026 State Capital Budget in order to ensure enhanced safety and economic prosperity among Alaskan coastal communities.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2021-13 A resolution in support of establishing standards and regulations for unorganized boroughs.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League supports the idea of “maximum local self- government”; and

WHEREAS, Article 10, Section 3 of the Alaska Constitution requires the Legislature set policy for the establishment, alteration, and nature of Boroughs; and

WHEREAS, the legislature has not yet enacted standards and procedures for the establishment of unorganized boroughs and the lack of such standards and procedures precludes a meaningful determination of whether an unorganized area has attained the fiscal and administrative capacity to support areawide functions; and

WHEREAS, if such standards existed, an unorganized area could be signaled to form an organized borough when it achieved the administrative and fiscal capacity to support areawide functions.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League supports establishing standards and regulations for unorganized boroughs.

Resolution #2021-21 A resolution requesting that the Legislature review and make optional exemptions that are more appropriately decided at the local level.

WHEREAS, increasingly, local governments are expected to fulfill State responsibilities that the State can no longer afford; and

WHEREAS, in order to meet these obligations, local governments must have the tools at their disposal necessary to deliver essential services and ensure that the corresponding tax burden does not fall disproportionately on the rest of the tax base; and

WHEREAS, the State's exemptions of certain types of property affect the ability of local governments to deliver essential services; and

WHEREAS, mandatory exemptions result in a more limited tax base, and the tax rate more heavily burdening only certain portions of a city or borough's residents; and

WHEREAS, in particular, an exemption of household furniture and personal effects (29.45.030(a)(2)) is better determined at the local level; and

WHEREAS, in particular, the undeveloped value of natural resources in place is reserved to taxation by the State, even as the impact and benefit may be managed also at the local level, and local control of taxation may increase the viability of a project; and

WHEREAS, in particular, the exemption (29.45.030(a)) of AIDEA land and the Alaska Railroad (42.40.910) – two public corporations that maintain a business model similar to that of any private corporation – are inconsistent with a public purpose; and

WHEREAS, broad age-based exemptions do not take into account the need or lack thereof of those residents, which runs counter to best practices, and in the development of mandatory age-based exemptions the State committed to reimbursement and has not since 1985, now valued at more than \$90 million.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML requests that the Governor and Legislature review all mandatory exemptions affecting local governments and were found to be beneficial pass legislation that makes optional, needs-based, and/or locally determined those accounted for above.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 20, 2020.

Resolution #2022-04 A resolution encouraging the RCA and Legislature to make adjustments to the Power Cost Equalization program for communities and utilities that are moving towards energy independence using renewable generation.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League supports the idea of “maximum local self- government”; and

WHEREAS, the stated purpose of the PCE program is to provide benefits to rural communities by lowering the electricity costs paid by customers, which in turn helps to ensure the sustainability of remote economies dependent on available, reliable, and centralized power; and

WHEREAS, the PCE program subsidizes the electric rates for the first 750 monthly, residential kWhs to levels comparable to those paid by consumers in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, as well as provides some additional financial support to cover a portion of the electrical costs for community facilities; and

WHEREAS, the PCE program provides benefits to these rural communities based on a formula which is heavily weighed by the cost and quantity of diesel fuel used to produce energy in the communities; and

WHEREAS, some rural communities are increasing the use of renewable energy sources to reduce and/or replace traditional diesel power systems, and now realizing there is a disincentive to do so given the current PCE regulations; and

WHEREAS, as an example, since 2017 the City of King Cove and its residents are not receiving any PCE support because their two hydro facilities are producing about 85% of their annual electric demand of approximately 5 MWhs; and

WHEREAS, decreasing the dependence on diesel-generated power while incurring new debt costs for the development of these renewable energy production does not appear to be equitably considered in the current PCE regulations; and

WHEREAS, PCE regulations allow for an annual depreciation value of up to 50 years on the capital investments/ loans for these facilities and the inclusion of annual interest paid on these long term debts, however, this ends up being only a modest annual expenditure “savings” compared to the avoided diesel fuel costs and does not appear to get equitably considered in the current PCE regulations; and,

WHEREAS, AML’s current Policy Statement on Energy states “Support for vetting of and investing in energy projects, processes and programs that decrease energy costs; reimburse municipal debt or investments corresponding to and by utilizing PCE savings.”

WHEREAS, under current PCE reimbursement, the revenue from sales of excess electricity from intermittent generation, like wind, for the purposes like distributed thermal storage are disincentivized, since these sales cannot be subtracted from non-fuel expenses for purposes PCE reimbursement; and,

WHEREAS, the equivalent revenue sale of waste heat from diesel generation can be subtracted from non-fuel expense for purposes of PCE reimbursement; and,

WHEREAS, the additional revenue from sale of excess renewable generation for heating are also counted against the household cap for PCE reimbursement, further decreasing PCE reimbursement; and,

WHEREAS, the current structure of PCE reimbursement for heating disincentivizes innovative approaches to renewables integration and decreasing diesel dependence that otherwise offer the opportunity to reduce the household energy burden of heating oil; and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML supports and advocates for the reform of the PCE program to make the necessary modifications to allow for a more equitable treatment of the annual debt costs for these renewable energy investments vis-a-vis the tradeoff of replacing annual diesel fuel costs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AML supports and advocates for a “renewable energy debt reimbursement factor” be added to the PCE regulations which includes: a) criteria regarding the size and annual production of the renewable energy facility; b) establish a benchmark for a required annual amount of community/utility electricity produced with renewable energy production; and c) establish a factor that considers the amount of avoided annual diesel costs resulting from the renewable energy source compared to the annual debt costs to displace these diesel costs; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AML supports and advocates for PCE regulation to allow that revenue from the sale of excess renewable generation for heating be subtracted from non-fuel expenses for purposes of PCE reimbursement; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AML supports and advocates for PCE regulation to allow the exemption of otherwise curtailed KwHs sold for heating from the 750 KwH household cap for PCE.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, November 17, 2021.

Resolution #2023-01 A resolution calling for legislation to protect public interest by lessening the burden of commercial public records requests on Alaska's local governments.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Public Records Act aims to promote government transparency by laying out requirements for public records requests for state agencies and local governments; and

WHEREAS, commercial firms, which send blanket requests for public records nationally, have proliferated with the development of the internet and since passage of the Act; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Public Records Act currently requires local governments to provide up to five hours of staff time monthly for all requestors before fees can be assessed for a request – a requirement that national, commercial data firms take advantage of at the public's expense; and

WHEREAS, these requests use up valuable staff time in local governments across the state who have few employees, impeding the provision of key government services; and

WHEREAS, many states make provisions for the difference between individual, media, and commercial requests, and in- and out-of-state requests, with a fee and time structure responsive thereto; and

WHEREAS, the many local governments that have not already established their own processes for accepting requests, such as a request form, are potentially in violation of the Act if they do not respond to the flood of generic, spam-like email public records requests being distributed by these commercial firms and entities outside the state; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) established Fee Guidelines for the Freedom of Information Act that establishes a distinct Commercial Use Requestor fee category for these requests, which establishes fees for public records requests by those who seek records for “a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester”; and

WHEREAS, the OMB Fee Guidelines could be used as a framework for local governments and state agencies to be adequately compensated for work provided to commercial data firms, if the Alaska Public Records Act were amended to allow this.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League supports amendments to the Alaska Public Records Act that protect public interest by lessening the burden of commercial or blanket public records requests on Alaska's local governments; and

BE IT FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the State to consider other actions that might help local governments manage invasive public records requests that take advantage of current public records laws without providing public benefit.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-02 A resolution in support of reducing the number of required city council officials from seven to three in communities under 1,000, via referendum or other mechanisms.

WHEREAS, Title 29 requires that second class cities have city councils of seven members; and

WHEREAS, the intent of the statute is to ensure appropriate representation within a community and avoid conflicts of interest in decision-making; and

WHEREAS, the number of seats on a governing body is variable, otherwise, with home rule or first class cities able to have as few as five, and some assemblies as large as 12; these are fairly responsive to population; and

WHEREAS, in many counties across the nation, decision-making is accomplished with just three county commissioners while maintaining transparent and accountable governance; and

WHEREAS, seven council members may make sense in larger communities but becomes problematic in smaller; and

WHEREAS, in a community of 1,000 with 500 adults of voting age, the council is .01% and in a community of 40 with voting-age adults at 20, the council is 35% of the community; and

WHEREAS, community leadership in small communities is limited not just by population but by the multiple leadership roles that may co-exist, including as tribal council members, Village Corporation board members, utility managers, and others, including at the City; and

WHEREAS, having a one-size fits all approach of seven council members may mean that some communities are never able to fill all seven seats, and are less likely to meet quorum; and

WHEREAS, local governments may be more effectively governed with a council that is more responsive to the size of the community and the availability of council members; and

WHEREAS, a smaller council in small communities can be more flexible in meeting regularly, more responsive to community needs, maintain accountability and transparency, and be in a stronger position to complete financial and governance requirements of the State.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the amendment of Title 29 to allow for council seats that are responsive to community size and need, and which may range from three to seven; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a formula may be established in law or provided for as an option based on referendum by residents.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-03 A resolution urging the Governor and Legislature to exercise oversight of the Local Boundary Commission, to meet the Constitutional obligation for maximum local self-government.

WHEREAS, Article X of the Alaska Constitution obligates the State to provide for maximum local self-government, and Alaska's economy depends on well-supported local self- governance, which is more effective at adaptively meeting community needs than state or federal intervention; and

WHEREAS, the status quo has left communities in the unorganized borough without the tools to consider or pursue incorporation, the State has left communities to cede local control for State management, thus depriving residents of maximum local self-governance and its benefits, and Alaska's communities are required to depend on the State to establish or amend their boundaries and status, even as local governments are providing essential services in the face of changing conditions, fiscal uncertainty, and global instability; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution created the Local Boundary Commission as the mechanism by which municipal boundaries are confirmed, and which the Legislature and Governor set policy, composition, and procedure for; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution's framers intended the Commission to bring flexibility, adaptability, and rationality to local government boundaries by analyzing proposed changes fairly and objectively consistent with maximum local self-government and the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Commission set the precedent of using the legislative review method as the primary procedure for Commissioners' consideration of annexation, ensuring that the framers' vision for the local boundary process was implemented accurately; and

WHEREAS, by veering from precedent and disregarding their obligation to a fair and objective process, the Commission has created a process that does not result in greater local self-governance, deterring communities from seeking boundary changes, growth, and incorporation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League urges the Governor and Legislature to exercise oversight and review policy of the Local Boundary Commission, including confirmation by the Legislature of Commissioners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League urges sitting and prospective Commissioners to the Local Boundary Commission to consider their procedures and decision- making to ensure the fairness and objectivity required of them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that State policymakers revisit how they can support well- reasoned annexation, incorporation, and borough formation to meet the obligation for maximum local self-government, the Mandatory Borough Act, and the intent of the Constitution.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-04 A resolution supporting the sustainability of Community Assistance.

WHEREAS, Community Assistance (known formerly as Community Revenue Sharing) represents a decades-long partnership between local governments and the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, that partnership is a recognition of the State's retention of royalty and production rights on resource development, that local tax bases would not be able otherwise to ensure operations, and the need to deliver essential public services outside of State government; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance has seen continued degradation over the years, including in 2015 a reduction of 50%, and if measured from FY20 to FY85 and adjusting for inflation, the value of Community Assistance should be 984% greater than it currently is; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance represents as much as 80% of some local government budgets, and for 100 communities greater than 20%; and when Community Assistance was zeroed out in the early 2000s, 14 local governments ceased day-to-day operations; and

WHEREAS, the formula of the Community Assistance Fund determines the annual payment to communities, with a payout of a third of available funds; and the availability of funds designated in statute to recapitalize Community Assistance is based on the waterfall of earnings from the PCE Endowment; and

WHEREAS, when earnings are less than needed, it has been the policy choice of the current administration to fund less than what is needed for full recapitalization, which has resulted in payments to communities that are increasingly inadequate; and

WHEREAS, when this intergovernmental transfer or resource sharing does not occur it requires local governments to consider other revenue mechanisms, such as taxes, or diminishes their ability to provide services; and

WHEREAS, at the same time, inflation has negatively impacted the purchasing power of this annual transfer, thereby negating some of the benefits that local governments might otherwise expect; and

WHEREAS, it would require legislation to address the fact that the Community Assistance Fund does not retain its earnings and payments aren't inflation adjusted; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League believes that community revenue sharing is a critical way in which the State can contribute to local governments' ability to deliver on obligations of education, public safety, infrastructure, and economic development.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests of the Legislature statutory changes that ensure the capitalization of the Community Assistance Fund and enable it to grow through earnings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature include in legislation the ability to increase payments to local governments that account for inflation and include additional transfers to compensate local governments for their provision on behalf of the state of basic obligations (police, jails, etc.), reimbursements (bond debt), or unfunded mandates (mandatory exemptions).

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-05 A resolution opposing any changes to PERS/TRS that increase the unfunded liability and supporting additional State contributions that reduce the non-state employer share in order to increase the efficacy of recruitment and retention in Alaska.

WHEREAS, the State-managed pension system PERS/TRS is a critical tool for recruitment and retention in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, not only do PERS payments represent a significant portion of a local government's or school district's personnel budget but it places constraints on local governments and other employers that lessen their ability to successfully recruit and retain staff; and

WHEREAS, the State does not currently pay for termination studies or costs, and reductions in its workforce shift costs to the additional state contribution (future costs) and onto the balance sheets of all employers; and

WHEREAS, the current unfunded liability is more than \$5 billion, and the pension plan itself is less than 70% funded, even as gains have been made in more recent years; and

WHEREAS, while currently there exists only a defined contribution pension option, there are increasingly calls for a defined benefit option presented as a solution to hiring and retention by school districts and public safety professionals; and

WHEREAS, there is merit to an argument that defined benefit is a preferred employee retirement plan; and

WHEREAS, it is also true that this is not the only option, and that for employers required to fund the net pension liability of the plan when assumptions fail, it is a risk-filled proposition; and

WHEREAS, the majority of what employers contribute to PERS/TRS (of the 22%) is for past cost, essentially trying to pay down the unfunded liability that was created in past years; and

WHEREAS, if the 22% were reduced, either based on higher levels of fundedness or by the State taking on an increased share as costs are reduced, then employers would have greater flexibility to fund beyond Tier IV requirements and/or to contribute to a deferred compensation plan; and

WHEREAS, the current law reduces the additional state contribution as the fundedness of the plan improves, without adjusting the non-state employer cap (unless the total cost falls below that cap); and

WHEREAS, a system of adjusting accordingly would ensure the State is always contributing an appropriate level while non-state employers have the opportunity to see benefits that could accrue to employees; and

WHEREAS, a change to current law could include a sliding scale for the non-state employer share such that it represents the actual cost and then an amount distant from the total cost that is otherwise contributed to by the State through its additional contribution; and

WHEREAS, this can be thought of in terms of a floor for non-State employers of the actual cost, for which their contribution could not be adjusted below, but the floor for the State to not be limited by the non-State employer cap of 22%; and

WHEREAS, the State's additional contribution would be maintained and increased relative to or expressed as a larger percentage of the past service cost; and

WHEREAS, under this formation, employers would have greater flexibility, and be in a better position to consider new pension plans or retirement benefits; and

WHEREAS, to the extent that new plans are proposed by the State then they should be optional at the employer level, segregated in their liability, and come with an additional state contribution to past costs that meaningfully reduces the overall net pension liability of all employers.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports reform to PERS that includes a complete pay-down of the unfunded liability; and

BE IT FURTHER THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports all tools possible for recruitment and retention and expresses concern about the introduction of a defined benefit plan to PERS/TRS, without the State addressing current net pension liability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature should amend statute to accommodate a reduction to the non-state employer cap, such that it reduces in relation to the total cost while the additional state contribution is maintained at levels that advance the reduction of the unfunded liability; AND

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League conditionally requests that the State also conduct termination studies, small or struggling employers be allowed to opt out of the system, and that the high interest rate on non-payment be eliminated.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-06 A resolution expressing concern about consideration of a State spending cap.

WHEREAS, AML has advocated for a sustainable fiscal policy for more than a decade, and most recently this has referenced “Eight Stars of Gold,” an eight-point fiscal plan that recognizes the trade-offs necessary to achieve such a goal; and

WHEREAS, while this includes new revenues, efficient delivery of government services, partnerships with local governments and nonprofits, effective use of Permanent Fund earnings, and addressing our infrastructure needs and Constitutional obligations, it recognizes that a spending cap may be part of the negotiated solutions; and

WHEREAS, local governments are apprehensive about a cap on State spending that may result in limiting the provision of State services, inhibiting partnerships at the local level, and which could decrease State investments into capital needs; and

WHEREAS, local governments are also very experienced with tax, revenue, or spending caps at the local level, which are direct expressions of local resident will that come with potential reductions in services and unmet need, and active engagement; and

WHEREAS, AML’s fiscal policy working group identified the best spending cap as a broad- based tax, inasmuch as it results in a stable funding stream that can be anticipated and projected out into future years without the instability experienced with a resource tax; and

WHEREAS, research has proven that citizens are much more actively engaged in State decision- making when they are also taxpayers, and cognizant of budget implications; and

WHEREAS, a challenging aspect of implementation of a spending cap is that determining a baseline is difficult, and for as much as State spending in one year may look high, averaged over time it becomes standard, or if low spending over time feels like a new standard, it may not reflect the deficiency relative to need; and

WHEREAS, even basing a cap on economic activity may fail to recognize and account for a baseline of need at the beginning or how to adjust in times of economic challenge; and

WHEREAS, establishing a spending cap now will need to take into account infrastructure deficits, economic goals, and policy goals; and

WHEREAS, at the local level, a fund balance policy is an effective tool, such that when there are funds in excess of the budget they are intentionally set aside for a variety of purposes, but also there are bounds for a minimum and maximum; and

WHEREAS, it should be understood that a spending cap should come as part of a comprehensive policy, may result in prescriptive spending that does not meet the needs of Alaskans, and in other states has had unintended consequences; and

WHEREAS, a spending cap is not an effective answer to insufficient revenues, nor does it necessarily pave the way for the establishment of sustainable revenue sources.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League would consider with caution a State spending cap, expect to be active in any negotiated solution, and in that consideration would prioritize the ability of the State to meet its Constitutional obligations, address years of insufficient spending on capital and operating needs, and resolve at the same time other systemic issues of the State, including

its unfunded pension liability, inconsistent approach to public safety and education, and infrastructure deficit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a broad-based tax and fund balance policy may achieve the same goals, and AML is willing to work with the Legislature to share best practices experienced at the local level that can apply at the State.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-07 A resolution to support full funding of State-directed presumptions of liability, including the consideration of a Trust to support local government employers impacted thereby.

WHEREAS, according to AS 23.30.121 compensation is required for disability as a result of the diseases described in section (b) of this statute; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League members are the largest employers of these firefighters in Alaska, who are disproportionately affected by these diseases due to the nature of their employment; and

WHEREAS, the majority of their worker's compensation insurance is provided by pooled public insurance entities, for whom even few claims on limited assets may result in destabilization; and

WHEREAS, the presumption of compensability by the State is an unfunded obligation for local governments to bear, and it has been found that a state's presumption of compensability elsewhere in the nation has risked the insurance coverage of those employees; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League is strongly supportive of mechanisms that improve and redress the health of all employees, and while health insurance and programs are the correct way to address health inequities and disease, may be supportive of State presumption of compensability to the extent it is funded by the State; and

WHEREAS, the State's presumption of compensability is a clear prioritization by the State of the health of its public safety, a prioritization that should result in appropriate levels of resourcing to match the commitment; and

WHEREAS, the State should provide a reliable funding stream from which to compensate Alaska's public safety professionals and volunteers, and there are models elsewhere to establish a Trust that would fulfill this obligation; and

WHEREAS, the State – in placing a priority on the health and well-being of firefighters – may express that priority by making contributions to a Trust that reflect the potential costs of the presumptions that have been enacted, and

WHEREAS, the State would place funding in a designated fund, or account, for workers compensation claims submitted under AS 23.30.121(b), from which the State would reimburse the individual, employer, or insurance carrier.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests that the State entrust funds to manage the potential risk associated with these presumptions and join municipal employers in supporting the health and safety of our public safety professionals.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-08 A resolution supporting the establishment of public safety matching funds by the State.

WHEREAS, it is the State's constitutional obligation to provide for public health and public wellness, which should be understood to include the provision of public safety through sufficient law enforcement, fire and emergency response, and corrections; and

WHEREAS, as political subdivisions of the State, local governments take on the majority of these responsibilities, with the vast majority of police occurring locally, including 40 local governments with police departments, and many other communities with police powers that translate into the hiring of Village Police Officers; and

WHEREAS, it is also true that many local governments have been unable to identify the resources necessary to establish or strengthen local law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, in communities without local law enforcement, it is the responsibility of the State Troopers to deliver public safety, and the Department of Public Safety bears the costs of delivery of law enforcement in some of the most populated and the most remote areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, there is an inconsistent application of public safety in Alaska, which may not produce the desirable outcomes expected by residents or envisioned in the Constitution, and that inconsistency – where in most areas the State pays the entirety of the costs and lack of capacity may not ensure adequate law enforcement, while in others local governments pick up the entirety of the costs, save the State money in doing so, and are responsive to local public safety needs – is not fair to the State, nor local governments; and

WHEREAS, one way in which to address this while maintaining local control over the decision whether to take on police powers, or not, is for the State to establish a basic minimum resource obligation that it will provide to cities and boroughs in Alaska for law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, essentially, the Legislature may determine in statute a mechanism by which to establish the potential for a transfer of funds to a local government that has taken or takes on police powers and establishes adequate policing within its jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, this incentive should be consistent with variables that include total population and standards for officer per capita, and these can be thought of in terms of matching funds, as part of a community dividend, or added to Community Assistance, and may be scalable by need and over time.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the Legislature to develop a mechanism to incentivize and reimburse local governments for the implementation of police powers and provision of public safety on behalf of the State.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-09 A resolution in support of accelerating the transfer of State lands to local governments, completing the municipal lands program, and waiving additional survey costs.

WHEREAS, local governments are responsible for more land management than the State of Alaska, with the bulk of these lands found within borough boundaries, and

WHEREAS, boroughs have the statutory responsibility for planning and platting of not just their lands, but State lands as well, and local planning commissions are also responsible for working with federal land managers; and

WHEREAS, borough planning and platting authority is a power devolved from the State, and is a responsibility, then, that the State no longer performs, thus saving the State costs involved; and

WHEREAS, increasing local control of lands within municipal boundaries has a significant impact on their ability to promote economic development and may contribute to cost savings for the State; and

WHEREAS, the Municipal Land Entitlement Program provides Alaskans local governance by determining municipal land entitlements and transferring lands to municipalities under the Municipal Entitlement Act; the program is housed in the Department of Natural Resources and is governed by AS 29.65.010-29.65.130; and

WHEREAS, about 1.35 million acres of State land will eventually be transferred to municipal ownership through this program; and

WHEREAS, of the land transferred to date, municipalities have sold about 140,000 acres to private owners – that means that local governments have been able to move about 22% of their lands into private hands; and

WHEREAS, survey costs are high, requirements are onerous, and agency work slow; it is difficult to move from land approved by the State to land available for sale and streamlining this process, reducing barriers and costs, and increasing timeliness would facilitate development; and

WHEREAS, there remain 136,000 acres of land waiting for entitlement, which is land that local governments are depending on to develop, and which would increase their land available to meet a variety of needs; and

WHEREAS, there is an insufficient amount of vacant, unappropriated, unreserved (VUU) lands available for new borough formation; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Lands Act requires some portion of this land to be available for borough formation, and the State may not have allocated enough of this for the remaining unorganized boroughs; and

WHEREAS, the State may need to consider a set aside, now, to benefit those areas of the state that may have an interest in borough formation but no available VUU lands; if the State has insufficient land available for these purposes, it may need to compensate unorganized boroughs accordingly; and

WHEREAS, local governments are the most direct beneficiaries of private development, have the most at stake and therefore the most interest in a process that works well; and

WHEREAS, political subdivisions of the State determine appropriate levels of service and infrastructure maintenance responsibilities for residential and commercial properties, ensuring a uniform level of

platting that corresponds to planning, zoning, and the needs of the local governments and property owners, accomplished in cooperation with developers; and

WHEREAS, there exist numerous options for strengthening State-local cooperation on lands development, including:

- Lease-share agreements for large tracts
- State seat on planning/platting commissions and/or Joint Lands Commission
- Streamlined planning/platting processes between local governments
- Cost-share for access improvements
- Long-term planning processes
- Remote access requirements – waiver on standards within State Statute and Code
- Include boroughs as part of Agency review
- Municipal Entitlement Lands transfers
- State to complete surveying process
- Sale/lease of state lands for disposal to private owners

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the State establishing ways in which lands may be transferred more expeditiously to local governments and in support of future organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a joint, high-level collaborative effort between local governments and the State may facilitate this process and will require active engagement by the Legislature.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-10 A resolution supporting State provision of non-federal match for local government infrastructure projects, and to address gaps in federal infrastructure funding.

WHEREAS, recent federal infrastructure investments provide Alaska's State, local, and Tribal governments with a once in a generation opportunity to make formative change and address incredible need; and

WHEREAS, discretionary, competitive grants for local and Tribal governments are a significant part of the new laws, however, many smaller governments lack the capacity or resources to compete and execute federal funding; and

WHEREAS, the infrastructure needs of communities in Alaska extend beyond the scope of federal programs in areas such as housing, public safety facilities, school facilities, and recreation and quality of life infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the State is in a position to identify and coordinate those community needs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the State to leverage federal infrastructure investment by providing access to funds that could be used for non-federal match by local governments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the identification of methods to make funding available for community facilities that might not otherwise be available through federal infrastructure investment.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-11 A resolution supporting the ability for school districts to more efficiently deliver education to changing school populations by consolidating facilities without penalty.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development projects that Alaska's population of children aged 0 to 19 will decrease by six percent by 2050; and

WHEREAS, local governments are responsible for the majority of school districts in Alaska and contribute 35 percent of education funding; and

WHEREAS, this contribution represents the largest expenditure of those local governments with school districts; and

WHEREAS, school districts vary by size and population trend, with some growing and others declining, which requires a State approach that funds maintenance and construction on the one hand, and incentivizes change otherwise; and

WHEREAS, the State appropriates funds for school construction and major maintenance as available, and school construction and major maintenance funding has diminished over the years, and generally not fully funded the entirety of the need; and

WHEREAS, the State has on average only funded 8% of school construction and major maintenance; and

WHEREAS, school bond debt reimbursement has increasingly been unfunded, and that cost shifted to local governments, and there is currently a moratorium; and

WHEREAS, when a school district faces declining enrollment and increased costs of maintenance, it may be in a community's best interest to consolidate its school facilities; and

WHEREAS, there do not exist incentives for encouraging school districts to reimagine or redevelop schools in response to population change other than growth; and

WHEREAS, the school size multiplier in the current funding formula (AS 14.17.410(b)(1)(A) and AS 14.17.450) penalizes a school district for consolidating facilities; and

WHEREAS, local governments and school districts are committed to efficient and effective delivery of public education but thereby constrained by State statute.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports amendments to the funding formula to reduce penalties for consolidation of school facilities within a district and to increase incentives thereof.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-12 A resolution requesting that the State increase and inflation-proof the BSA and implement a more equitable local funding mechanism than the required local contribution.

WHEREAS, it is the State's constitutional obligation to establish and maintain a system of public schools; and

WHEREAS, the State currently provides only 64% of education funding, while local government contributions and local impact aid make up the remainder; and

WHEREAS, as part of the funding formula designed by the State, a minimum local contribution of 2.65 mils (or equivalent) is required; and

WHEREAS, federal Impact Aid is intended to be distributed directly to school districts impacted by federal lands and activities, and to supplement local budgets; and

WHEREAS, education is by far the largest budget item for those local governments with education powers, and is required of all boroughs, and home rule and first class cities in the Unorganized Borough; and

WHEREAS, increasing local contributions to keep pace with rising costs means trade-offs for each local government, including increasing taxes and decreased spending on other essential programs, such as public safety and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the State's fiscal challenges increase the potential for additional costs to fall on boroughs, and home rule or first class cities in the Unorganized Borough; and

WHEREAS, instead of shifting the cost of education – and the State's responsibilities – to local governments, the State should give greater flexibility to local governments to give as they are able, while the State simultaneously ensures adequate levels of funding, and

WHEREAS, the State has not increased the BSA corresponding to higher costs and inflation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML requests the State raise and inflation proof the BSA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that AML encourages the State to pursue a more equitable and inclusive means of funding education than is currently raised through the required local contribution.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-13 A resolution supporting the reduction of the interest rate on bulk fuel loans to not more than 2% and increasing the cap on funding as or when fuel prices increase.

WHEREAS, the State provides an important service in providing capital to local governments that have a limited tax base, and this is especially true when considering purchases such as that of bulk fuel, which communities depend on to ensure their residents have sufficient supply over the course of the year; and

WHEREAS, these purchases happen annually, often as part of a single barge delivery, with price set upon delivery and fixed at that resale rate over the course of the year; and

WHEREAS, very few local governments have access to the capital needed to pay for the entirety of the delivery at once and recouping the expense occurs over a long period of time; and

WHEREAS, fuel prices are significantly higher in much of rural Alaska than elsewhere in the state or nation, and especially this year, with the high rate of inflation and supply chain issues, as well as high oil prices, the cost to communities may well be beyond reach; and

WHEREAS, the State's bulk fuel revolving loan fund is limited to \$750,000, which in a high price environment may be insufficient; and

WHEREAS, as prices increase and there is greater need for the service, and the total borrowed increases, the State's administrative fee as a percentage of loan should be considered an unnecessary burden; and

WHEREAS, the State is in a position to provide for its administration of this service out of general funds, and should not pass costs to local governments; and

WHEREAS, aggregating purchasing will allow communities to take advantage of economies of scale; and

WHEREAS, State costs transferred to local governments result in less capacity at the local level to deliver essential services, and/or the need for greater revenues through taxes or fees, which means higher costs for residents that are already paying some of the highest fuel prices in the nation; and

WHEREAS, the State can consider removing and reducing fees associated with the service as of significant public benefit at a time when Alaskans are struggling to keep up with the uncertainty of the global and local market.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League encourages the State to remove or significantly reduce any fees associated with the bulk fuel revolving loan fund, and increase the total amount available to borrow, including to additionally capitalize it as needed and explore aggregated purchasing.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 9, 2022.

Resolution #2023-15 A resolution supporting statutory change to allow for the implementation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs).

WHEREAS, a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) is an organization that identifies local transportation needs, conducts planning, assists local governments, and supports the statewide transportation planning process in nonmetropolitan regions of a State; and

WHEREAS, RTPOs benefit rural regions (those without a Metropolitan Planning Organization, which only exist in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and soon the Mat Su Borough) by instilling a systematic transportation planning process, involving local officials in decision making, and providing a means to establish regionally unique priorities; and

WHEREAS, at States' discretion, federal funding may be used to support RTPOs, and State and local contributions ensure that sufficient resources empower effective planning; and

WHEREAS, the existence of an RTPO makes prioritized projects more competitive under many federal funding programs; and

WHEREAS, federal surface transportation law defines RTPOs very specifically and RTPOs must be designated by their state's governor to be considered an RTPO under the federal definition; and

WHEREAS, legislation for a statutory change may be required for the implementation of RTPOs in Alaska.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports statutory changes to allow the implementation of RTPOs and encourages appropriate levels of funding provided by the State to ensure necessary levels of staffing and planning resources.

Resolution #2024-01 A resolution in support of possible legal action to determine the full extent of the State's constitutional obligation to provide for a system of public education.

WHEREAS, it is the State's constitutional obligation to establish and maintain a system of public schools; and

WHEREAS, the value of the Base Student Allocation and Pupil Transportation Funding programs have eroded due to inflation and have been in decline since 2009; and

WHEREAS, school districts face increasing energy, maintenance, personnel, and insurance costs; and
WHEREAS, local governments cover an increasingly larger portion of education funding; and

WHEREAS, the State has underfunded school construction and major maintenance for decades, with fewer than 20% of identified priorities addressed on average; and

WHEREAS, local governments have insufficient resources to address capital needs of the State's schools, especially in Regional Education Attainment Areas, which are the responsibility of the Department of Education and Early Development; and

WHEREAS, increasing local contributions to keep pace with rising costs means trade-offs for each local government, including increasing taxes and decreased spending on other essential programs, such as public safety and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the ending of the school bond debt reimbursement program has further limited the opportunity to jointly address the needs of schools; and

WHEREAS, education is by far the largest budget item for those local governments with education powers, and is required of all boroughs, and home rule and first class cities in the Unorganized Borough; and

WHEREAS, the education funding formula designed by the State results in Alaska remaining one of the few states that implements an equalization formula so that it can use federal impact aid to offset its own obligations, and which is meant for localities; and

WHEREAS, AML has a resolution in place correctly identifying Impact Aid as local; and

WHEREAS, the local contributions plus required State funding are no longer adequate to maintain Alaska's schools, with many districts facing school closures, growing class sizes, and the loss of valuable educational programs due to budget cuts.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML would consider providing support to members in relation to litigation that clarifies and/or establishes the responsibility of the State of Alaska to fund public education adequately and equitably, including for school construction and maintenance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the outcome of this litigation should determine the scope of local government's ability to contribute to local educational attainment and activities beyond the obligation of the State.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-03 A resolution in support of a strategic workforce recruitment and retention effort by and with the State of Alaska to correct high public sector vacancy rates.

WHEREAS, national employment data show that private employment has fully recovered from pre-pandemic levels, while state and local public employment remains below pre-pandemic numbers; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is operating with an average vacancy rate of 13.9% over the past year (October 2024) with some agencies, such as the Alaska Marine Highway System, facing vacancy rates greater than 50% at times; and

WHEREAS, the current vacancy rates impede the ability of the State of Alaska and local governments to provide public services to Alaskans, lower the State of Alaska's contributions to PERS, and hurt the economy; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska and local governments play key roles in implementing the provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act and obtaining funding for and building once-in-a-generation infrastructure projects; and

WHEREAS, the public sector faces specific barriers to hiring, like burnout, long hiring processes, and pay competition with the private sector.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML encourages the State of Alaska to address vacancy rates within State agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State's efforts be coordinated with local governments to implement complementary workforce recruitment and retention strategies within cities and boroughs.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-04 A resolution in support of requiring the Legislature to include fiscal notes that quantify costs to municipalities and school districts in legislation that impacts these entities.

WHEREAS, an “unfunded mandate” is any statute, administrative regulation, or order that demands action from a subordinate government without adequate provision for funding the cost to the subordinate government of implementing the demanded action; and

WHEREAS, unfunded mandates are a problem because the federal and state governments have tended to balance their budgets on the backs of subordinate governments, thereby shielding themselves from taking the fiscal responsibility for their own policy and program decisions; and

WHEREAS, from a purely political standpoint, an unfunded mandate can ensure that the blame for higher taxes or service cuts falls to local elected officials rather than the government that made the decision; and

WHEREAS, unfunded mandates are a threat to municipal and school district governance and operations in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, additional requirements of a municipality or school district, when not reimbursed, result in a loss of capacity to deliver public services to community members and students; and

WHEREAS, AS 24.08.035 requires that bills and resolutions carry fiscal notes that contain an estimate of the cost that would result from enactment for the current fiscal year and for five fiscal years in the future; and

WHEREAS, this statute limits those estimates to the cost to the State of Alaska alone, excluding costs that may fall to local governments and school districts to bear, obfuscating the true cost of enacting legislation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML supports legislation that requires the State of Alaska and Alaska State Legislature to include municipal and school district fiscal notes as part of its process in evaluating legislation that impacts local governments and public education.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-05 A resolution in support of legislation that requires prompt payment of contracted and formula funding obligations, including the distribution of Community Assistance.

WHEREAS, AS 36.90.200 requires the State of Alaska to pay contractors performing construction or public works activities in a timely manner; and

WHEREAS, this statute introduces penalties for non-compliance, including interest on non-payment, which reimburses the contractor for opportunity costs or additional burdens experienced; and

WHEREAS, the need for prompt payment extends well-beyond construction contracts and should be broadly applicable to all grantees and contractors of the State; and

WHEREAS, the State disburses money in multiple ways to many entities, including to healthcare organizations and non-profits receiving Medicaid reimbursement, and to local governments through programs like Community Assistance; and

WHEREAS, chronic delays in government payments are a serious problem for communities across the country, as well as in Alaska, with private, public, and nonprofit providing crucial health and human services to their communities; and

WHEREAS, many of these entities operate with less than 90 days in cash reserves, and some with little or none - "reimbursable" grant agreements require them to fund all the costs of services for 30 to 90 days before they can even invoice for payment; and

WHEREAS, delayed payments create hardships for organizations' ability to operate effectively, and extended delays jeopardize the health and well-being of those they serve on behalf of state agencies, as well as threaten the providers' financial stability and solvency, often forcing them to exhaust reserves and resort to lines of credit; and

WHEREAS, municipalities and other entities suffer due to delays in disbursements that may make them unable to fulfill their own obligations and provide their own services; and

WHEREAS, local governments have reported delayed payments that have affected property insurance renewals, payroll and project payments, delayed construction and maintenance activities, delayed bulk fuel commitments and contracting, inability to reflect non-federal match for federal grants; and

WHEREAS, there is an opportunity cost that comes with non-payment as well, especially when reserves have to be used that lessen investment returns, and otherwise interest and fees may compound non-payment; and

WHEREAS, it is in the State's interest to ensure the solvency and sustainability of public, private, and nonprofit organizations and can facilitate this by ensuring prompt payment.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that AML requests that the Alaska State Legislature pass legislation requiring the State of Alaska to provide prompt payments in all of its contracted and formula obligations, grants, or transfers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that State agencies should increase their ability to meet this duty and ensure appropriate levels of capacity to do so.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-06 A resolution in support of expanded funding for NOAA and partners to complete mapping and bathymetry of Alaska's coastal zone.

WHEREAS, Alaska's 66,000 miles of coastline are the longest of any state in the nation – and more than the rest of the nation combined – and are important places for economic activity, community development, transportation, and subsistence; and

WHEREAS, completed mapping and bathymetry is especially lacking for Alaska and for the Alaskan Arctic, which lack the comprehensive shoreline and nearshore maps available to much of the rest of the nation; and

WHEREAS, informed decisions and improved safety in the coastal zone depend heavily on accurate and up-to- date coastal mapping data; and

WHEREAS, community resilience to coastal hazards such as flooding, erosion, and tsunami begins with mapping data to establish baseline conditions and model change; and

WHEREAS, increased efforts to map Alaska's coastal zone will lead to improved access to and utilization of data; and

WHEREAS, mapping will bolster the shipping and fishing economy through safer maritime navigation; and

WHEREAS, mapping will ensure more resilient coastal economies through flood and wave impact modeling, data-driven coastal infrastructure development, improved emergency planning, and more effective community management plans; and

WHEREAS, the November 2019 Presidential Memorandum on Ocean Mapping of the United States Exclusive Economic Zone and the Shoreline and Nearshore of Alaska calls for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the State of Alaska, and the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee (AMEC) to develop an Alaska coastal mapping strategy; and

WHEREAS, sufficient funding will lead to seamless and accurate coastal mapping data that will support the State of Alaska, local governments, Alaska's economy, Tribes, national security, and the environment.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML requests that Congress allocate the resources necessary to complete the goals and objectives outlined in Mapping the Coast of Alaska: A 10-Year Strategy in Support of the United States Economy, Security, and Environment by 2030; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED in order to further the mission of NOAA in Alaska, we call upon the federal government to provide housing for NOAA employees, including in Ketchikan, the homeport of the NOAA research vessel Fairweather.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-07 A resolution in support of changes to HUD regulations to increase participation of Alaska local governments in HUD-funded programs.

WHEREAS, Alaska's existing housing stock is overcrowded, energy inefficient, and aging rapidly, while new housing construction is unable to keep up with demand, leading to a growing housing shortage across the state; and

WHEREAS, the shortage of housing means families struggle to find safe, stable, affordable housing, straining their physical and mental health; and

WHEREAS, the shortage of housing affects the ability of communities to recruit and retain professionals, including teachers, public safety officers, and healthcare workers, leading to worsening economic outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Entitlement Program exists to create transformative impact within communities, improve the lives of residents, especially those with low- and moderate-income levels, and develop strategies that bring partners and resources together; and

WHEREAS, Anchorage is the only Alaska city large enough to receive money directly from this program, receiving \$1.8 million in FFY 2024, or 0.05% of the national total; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska is awarded funding for the balance of the state, receiving \$2.7 million in FFY 2024, or 0.08% of the national total;

WHEREAS, HUD's 2023 Annual Homelessness Assessment Report to Congress shows that with a rate of 36 homeless individuals per 10,000 people, Alaska finds itself in the 7th position nationwide and that Alaska has seen a notable increase, with a 12.7% growth in homelessness since 2022, the 17th highest increase among all states; and

WHEREAS, in many communities across the state there are no emergency shelters, no vacancies of habitable structures, and the environmental conditions are so harsh that living outdoors results in freezing to death; and

WHEREAS, local governments continue to develop innovative solutions to the housing crisis, yet find themselves unable to access CDBG funds.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML requests that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development update the CDBG funding formulas and expand other programs to address the needs of small and rural communities in Alaska that are otherwise excluded.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-08 A resolution requesting the Alaska State Legislature encourage economic development through housing investments and policymaking.

WHEREAS, some estimates show the national shortage of affordable housing is 7.2 million, with an estimated 27,500 new housing units needed in Alaska over the next ten years;

WHEREAS, Alaska's rising rent, cost of building, and remodeling makes it one of the most expensive markets nationwide, causing a barrier to attract and retain workforce and Alaskan youth; and

WHEREAS, historically, the State of Alaska has played a role in encouraging housing development through loans or bonding via state agencies like AHFC; and

WHEREAS, the creation of Housing Alaskans: A Public-Private Partnership (HAPPP) in 2022, Alaska was one of the last states in the country without a statewide housing trust; and

WHEREAS, multiple committees in the Legislature address housing, including Labor and Commerce, State Affairs, and Community and Regional Affairs, with no singular Legislative committee tackling this issue in a systemic way; and

WHEREAS, the lack of available land, which could be alleviated by land transfers from the state and federal governments, and expensive infrastructure such as water, sewer, and road access, causes overcrowding and under development in communities; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's housing issues are at the intersection of workforce and economic development, family and youth retention and homelessness, and solving our housing issues can help to alleviate these matters.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AML encourages the Alaska Legislature to make meaningful investments into the statewide housing trust, HAPPP; and create a time-limited Legislative Committee to explore statewide housing solutions with actionable goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, AML encourages the Alaska Legislature to assist in making developable land available to local governments to spur housing construction; and create an infrastructure revolving fund focused on water, sewer, and roads to assist in development of the land.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-09 A resolution requesting the Alaska State Legislature assist communities in addressing homelessness.

WHEREAS, housing is the solution to homelessness, but until our housing shortage is addressed, local governments must look at making investments in emergency shelter and other support; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines homelessness as: individuals or families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; individuals or families who are temporarily couch surfing; unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age who are unstably housed; and individuals or families fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence and have no other residence; and

WHEREAS, the unduplicated statewide total count of clients within the Alaska Homeless Management Information System from August 2022 to August 2023 is 17,796 individuals; and

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of individuals and families have received some type of rental, utility or energy assistance that keeps them out of homelessness, but the recent growth in annual rent increases is putting the efficacy of these efforts in jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, a recent visit by HUD Secretary Fudge highlighted the need for review of HUD funding formulas and the negative and inequitable impact they have on Alaska; and

WHEREAS, communities, whether through local governments or through philanthropy, have made significant investments to address homelessness across the state; and

WHEREAS, emergency shelter includes large congregate shelter, non-congregate shelter, churches, or other smaller facilities serving many different populations; and

WHEREAS, line-item budget vetoes of the State of Alaska FY20 budget led to a reduction in shelter capacity throughout the state, highlighting the fragility of operational funding; and

WHEREAS, there are limits on local government capacity to take on operational costs of shelter, especially winter shelter, but are making investments across the system and need help from the State of Alaska to make these investments sustainable long term; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Council on the Homeless is responsible for updating and reporting on activities and goals of the 2009 Alaska Plan to End Long Term Homelessness; and

WHEREAS, HUD reports that several studies have found that, compared with the treatment first model, Housing First approaches offer greater long-term housing stability, especially among people experiencing chronic homelessness.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML supports the Alaska Legislature invest in regular operational funding for emergency shelters across the state; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AML requests that the governor task the Alaska Council on the Homeless to update Alaska's Plan to End Long Term Homelessness and encourages the update to adopt the housing first model and provide a continuum of services and an exit strategy with measurable, trackable outcomes.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-10 A resolution requesting the Alaska State Legislature approve an infrastructure general obligation bond for the 2026 election.

WHEREAS, ports, harbors, bridges, and roads are critical infrastructure for residents and businesses, and serve important functions such as: food security, fuel delivery, transportation and logistics, resource extraction, commercial fishing, tourism, hospitality, national security, and military preparedness; and

WHEREAS, Alaska has the most miles of coastline of any U.S. state, and communities maintain a total of 40 port and harbor facilities; and

WHEREAS, there is a critical need for coastal infrastructure repair and maintenance in Alaska, according to the Report Card for Alaska's Infrastructure 2021 by the Alaska Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers, awarded Alaska a grade of "D+" to its ports and harbors; and

WHEREAS, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), signed November 2021, authorizes \$1.2 trillion dollars of much-needed federal infrastructure investment, including over \$17 billion in funding for ports and maritime infrastructure over five years; and other financing such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan program may be available but requires a dedicated fund source; and

WHEREAS, in August 2023, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg visited several communities across Alaska to recognize recent investments and understand Alaska's unique geography, environment, and logistical challenges, speaking on multiple occasions to Alaska's reliance on maritime infrastructure and scale of investment needed; and

WHEREAS, federal infrastructure programs provide an opportunity to improve the state's aging infrastructure, but Alaska communities have limited capacity to fund the match amounts required by federal grants; and

WHEREAS, a 2011 study on Alaska's ports and harbors recommended the State of Alaska create a Transportation Infrastructure Development Program to create a comprehensive baseline assessment of coastal infrastructure and state funding of such infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has supported infrastructure projects across the state through voter-approved general obligation bonds, with a total of 51 bond packages being approved since statehood totaling \$2.2 billion, including a 2010 bond package for education infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the State Legislature must approve a general obligation bond package during the 34th Legislative Session for a bond package to appear on the 2026 ballot; and;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the legislature and administration funding critical infrastructure throughout the state with general obligation bonds and other or braided state and federal funding, including BIL grant funding, TIFIA financing, and other capital sources that leverage local match funding and revenue streams.

Updated December 2024.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.

Resolution #2024-11 A resolution requesting the Alaska State Legislature invest resources to address the state’s behavioral health needs, from crisis response to community-based services.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Behavioral Health Systems Assessment (2016) estimated that approximately one in four Alaska adults and youth live with one or more behavioral health conditions; and addressing behavioral health needs, at a population and community level, are a form of public health, from promoting mental health and well-being to having appropriate crisis response training and services; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution requires the State of Alaska to “provide for the promotion and protection of public health” (Article VII, Section 4), and the State has statutory responsibility for ensuring mental health services are provided, while Title 29 provides for certain types of local governments to adopt health powers, but only some local governments have taken on this authority, and most lack the necessary resources to implement an effective program; and

WHEREAS, since 2018 multiple partners are working together to improve Alaska’s system of care that responds to people experiencing a behavioral health crisis following the nationally recognized Crisis Now model, which implements a continuum of services; and

WHEREAS, some Alaska communities are leading local implementation of the Crisis Now model, including mobile crisis response teams in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Mat-Su, and crisis stabilization centers in Anchorage and Juneau, and other communities are exploring local services following the Crisis Now model; and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline was implemented in Alaska in July 2022, and the Alaska Legislature has already made investments to implement Crisis Now at a local level with \$8 million in capital funding; and

WHEREAS, communities look to State leadership and investment to address system-wide behavioral health needs, to ensure a stronger and more coordinated continuum of services that bridges the needs and complements investments at the local level;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Alaska Municipal League requests that the Alaska Legislature increase investments in Crisis Now, both at the statewide system level with investments such as permanent funding to operate the 988 Crisis Lifeline, and additional targeted investments to assist local communities in building out their own behavioral health services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, AML requests that the Alaska Legislature address gaps in the overall behavioral health continuum of services, including investments in workforce and housing, and removing regulatory barriers and programmatic inefficiencies.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

2025 Resolutions

For Member Action:

Upon Approval by Resolutions Committee

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WHEREAS, public charter schools and Tribal compact schools meet the diverse needs of students and their parents and guardians across the state; and

WHEREAS, charter schools are required to comply with district policies and regulations and charter schools create a financial obligation for local tax payers; and

WHEREAS, pupil enrollment in charter schools and Tribal compact schools does not change the overall amount of state funding available for public education but does reduce local school districts' ability to take advantage of economies of scale.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League calls on DEED to perform an assessment of the demand for charter schools and an assessment of the financial impacts to the public education system of opening new charter schools and Tribal compact schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League opposes changes to the charter school creation process that eliminate the control of local school districts to approve new charter schools.

SUBMITTED BY: ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION:
BUSINESS COMMITTEE ACTION:

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WHEREAS, Alaska's rural communities experience the highest levels of water insecurity in the United States due to the absence or deterioration of infrastructure and high operating costs, of which a significant portion is the cost of staffing,

WHEREAS, reduced utility revenues combined with increasing inflation make it difficult for communities to properly operate and maintain their water and wastewater systems;

WHEREAS, the Village Safe Water Act, in AS 46.07.020, instructs the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation to assure that there is at least one facility for safe water and hygienic sewage disposal in each village and;

WHEREAS, the Village Safe Water Act, in AS 46.07.050(b), gives the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation the authority to make grants to the governing bodies of water and wastewater facilities that do not have sufficient financial resources to operate and maintain the facility; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation has developed an Affordability Framework to assess the ability of households in Village Safe Water program communities to afford residential water and sewer rates, and which classifies communities as Low, Medium, or High Burden.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League calls on the legislature to appropriate \$10 million for grants for the operations of village water and wastewater facilities in High Burden communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports legislation that will increase the size of villages that qualify for programs under the Village Safe Water Act from a population of 1,000 to 1,500.

SUBMITTED BY: ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION:
BUSINESS COMMITTEE ACTION:

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WHEREAS, waste management is an essential government service provided by local governments to protect public health, control blight, and provide quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Alaskans generate over 15 million pounds annually of spent electronics that require expensive and specialized waste management resources and incur a significant future municipal cost through hastened need for capital funding of landfill closure and new site planning; and

WHEREAS, electronics contain toxic chemicals harmful to human health and subsistence resources, such as lead, cadmium, mercury, flame retardants, and PFAS, and these chemicals leach out as the landfilled electronics age, potentially flowing to nearby land, creeks, ponds, rivers, and bays that provide drinking water and important subsistence resources; and

WHEREAS, Class II and III rural landfills serve a third of all Alaskans, are unique to Alaska due to engineering and economy of scale considerations and are not designed to contain this leachate; and

WHEREAS, at least 150 communities are within one mile of their Class III landfill, where burning waste in passive steel containers called burnboxes is a common least-cost waste management strategy through which residents can be exposed to product chemicals; and

WHEREAS, electronics are proposed to be listed as a hazardous waste under the pending State of Alaska Hazardous Waste Program, potentially increasing the cost of electronics disposal; and

WHEREAS, 27 states have Product Stewardship laws that result in electronics manufacturers paying for all or part of their state's electronics recycling with residents in those states experiencing no associated increase in the cost for their electronics; and

WHEREAS, a Statewide Electronics Product Stewardship Program can be implemented without the levy of fees, taxes, or Alaska retail business burden; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska can develop a Product Stewardship program without administrative cost to the State, and municipalities are not beholden to participate in, or administer, the Program.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports a comprehensive statewide Product Stewardship Program for electronic recycling to substantially reduce local and regional government waste management costs as well as public health risks to their constituency.

SUBMITTED BY: ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION:
BUSINESS COMMITTEE ACTION:

Resolution #2025-04

A resolution supporting an amendment to Alaska Statute 29.71.800 to allow for web based public notice.

WHEREAS, Alaska municipalities take many actions that require public notice, including public meetings, public hearings, elections, assessment districts, property taxes, land and surplus sales, among others; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Statute (AS) Title 29 mandates that public notices be published and section 29.71.800 (18) state that “published” means appearing at least once in a newspaper of general circulation distributed to the municipality or, if there is no newspaper of general circulation distributed in the municipality, posting in three public places for at least five days; and

WHEREAS, newspapers throughout Alaska are reducing their physical paper publication dates or fail to publish public notices due to staff shortages, inhibiting municipalities’ governing bodies’ ability to take action at their regularly scheduled meetings; and

WHEREAS, many newspapers now publish online and municipalities publish public notices on their websites, a format that is becoming a common method for the public to access information; and

WHEREAS, it would be a great service to Alaska municipalities for section 29.71.800 (18) to amend “published” to include allowance for online public notice to achieve public notice requirements.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML requests that the Alaska State Legislature amend the definition of “published” in AS 29.71.800 (18) to include allowance for web based public notice to achieve municipal public notice requirements.

SUBMITTED BY: CITY OF HOMER
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION:
BUSINESS COMMITTEE ACTION:

Resolution #2025-05

A resolution urging the Alaska Legislature to maintain funding for Public Libraries Assistance Grant and the Statewide Library Electronic Doorway at FY 2024 levels.

WHEREAS, for decades Public Libraries Assistance (PLA) grants have supported libraries across Alaska with \$6,000 to \$7,000 in annual funding; and

WHEREAS, The Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) has provided Alaskans with access to online resources and databases for learning that would otherwise be unaffordable to their local libraries; and

WHEREAS, the budget for the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums reduced all PLA grants to \$1,829 in August 2024 before reversing those cuts, while SLED funding has been reduced from \$500,000 to \$369,514 in FY 2025; and

WHEREAS, the impacts of PLA funding cuts to libraries statewide varies from reductions in purchases of new materials to full closure, depending on the size and funding sources of individual libraries; and

WHEREAS, loss of SLED funding means that all public libraries in the state will have to eliminate significant online resources available to Alaska residents.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML urges the Alaska State Legislature to maintain funding for PLA grants and SLED at FY 2024 levels.

SUBMITTED BY: CITY OF HOMER
RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE ACTION:
BUSINESS COMMITTEE ACTION: