



MEMORANDUM

CC-26-058

Alaska Municipal League Trip Report

Item Type: Informational Memorandum
Prepared For: Mayor Lord and Homer City Council
Date: March 9, 2026
From: Councilmember Aderhold

I traveled to Juneau for the legislative fly-in meeting on February 15 and departed Juneau on February 20. On Monday I attended the Alaska Municipal League (AML) board meeting as treasurer. Board discussion items that may be of interest include:

- AML has long maintained contracts with state lobbyists to track legislation and support AML staff and membership in providing testimony on bills. The AML board is now considering bringing on a federal lobbyist to provide a similar purpose. AML will send out a poll to members gauging interest in municipalities financially supporting a federal lobbyist at this level. The intent would not be to compete with or replace municipal federal lobbying efforts, but to supplement AML's ability to support all members in understanding federal legislation and how it may impact Alaska municipalities. The board discussion was interesting. Some board members supported the effort and others did not, so it will be interesting to see the results of polling.
- AML's membership dues and the method for applying dues requirements for different sized municipalities have not changed in a long time. The methodology no longer appears appropriate or representative. The board will be reviewing dues during meetings this year.
- The summer conference this year will be held in Fairbanks and the summer conference next year will be held in Soldotna. Homer hosted the summer conference several years ago. Is there any interest in putting in a new bid?
- We briefly discussed the Conference of Young Alaskans that was held last December. Homer was unable to find an individual to sponsor for this event. The board discussed possible improvements that may increase participation, including possibly holding the conference when students are better able to participate.

The remainder of the week was filled with legislative, agency, and AML winter conference meetings.

Legislative meetings

Recognizing the position of the state budget, the City presented a variety of capital request priorities at different price points, as presented in Resolution 26-016. The best opportunity we have for

funding would be participating in a general obligation bond if the legislature sends one to the voters this year. With support of our lobbyists, we realized that our \$300K request for harbor security cameras may fit within the parameters of the cruise ship passenger tax because the project would support the safety and security of cruise ship passengers.

While we may not be successful in capital funding this year, I believe it is important that legislators know about our needs so when the financial resources of the state improve, we will be well-positioned to receive state support. The legislators we talked to appeared interested in our projects and seemed to understand the need for harbor expansion, spit road erosion fixes, and other priorities.

The Homer group consisted of city staff, council members, and our lobbyists Chris, Reggie, and Miles. Sometimes we met with legislators as part of a large group and other times we divided up. I participated in meetings with Representatives Vance, Eischeid, Stutes, Carrick (staff), Josephson, and Bynam and Senators Tobin, Hoffman (staff), and Stevens.

We also had dinners with Senator Stevens (Tuesday evening) and Representative Vance (Wednesday evening).

DOT&PF

Over recent years the city has developed a positive working relationship with the current Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Commissioner, Ryan Anderson and Deputy Commissioner Katherine Keith. I attended the DOT&PF meeting with Jenny Carroll and Bryan Hawkins, during which we discussed Homer spit erosion, the HAPP Loop, the Diamond Creek undercrossing, the need for DOT&PF to complete the Homer airport master plan, and the Spit Road x Kachemak Drive intersection and the potential congestion when Doyon builds out the hotel at Lighthouse Village. The meeting was positive, we'll see if we get traction on any of the issues we discussed.

AML meeting

With all our legislative meetings, there was not much time to attend the AML meeting. I did hear Senator Sullivan's address to AML the day before he spoke to the state legislature and presentations about the state pension program and forever chemicals (PFAS class action).

Senator Sullivan spoke on the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that was signed into law in summer 2025, and that the senator has renamed the Working Families Tax Cuts Act. He touted how good the bill will be for Alaska from the perspective of oil and gas development, jobs, tax relief, the US Coast Guard (Homer was one of the only harbors not mentioned), the military, aviation safety, health care, and other issues.

The Chair of the Alaska Retirement Management (ARM) Board provided a presentation about the status of Alaska's pension program and net pension liability. It was a 400-level talk and I'm at the 100 level of understanding, so I don't have much to report.

An attorney from New York, David Grossman, presented on a class action related to PFAS contamination of municipal water systems. PFAS chemicals, which are highly toxic, are/have been used in everything from non-stick pans to firefighting foam and have contaminated many municipal water supplies. There is a limited amount of time for municipalities to join the class by collecting water for PFAS testing. While the location of the Bridge Creek reservoir makes it unlikely Homer's water source would be contaminated with detectible levels of PFAS, it may be worth the time to collect the sample and join the class, even for future contamination (e.g., from firefighting).

Alaska Marine Exchange tour

Our entire group toured the Alaska Marine Exchange near downtown Juneau. Wow! This is an important nonprofit that does so much to improve marine safety around the state and in California. Impressive! It's good to know this group is there, watching Alaskan waters 24/7.