



2021

## Principles & Policy Statements

Approved by AML members on November 20, 2020.

### Principles

- Support the Alaska Constitution's mandate "to provide for maximum local self-government"
- Support policies that reduce tax burdens and reimburse for State-mandated exemptions
- Support State revenue assistance as an investment in and support for municipal governance
- Support adequate State funding for basic public services and infrastructure
- Oppose unfunded and underfunded State or Federal legislative and administrative mandates
- Oppose any efforts to reduce local revenues and local revenue authorities
- Oppose State or Federal policies that shift responsibilities to local governments without a negotiated agreement that includes adequate and full annual funding

### Policy Statements

#### **MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE (TITLE 29)**

- Support increased capacity within and professionalization of State tax assessment.
- Support improvements to records retention, public records access, and public notice.
- Support issuance of a municipal impact fiscal note within proposed legislation.

#### **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE AND REVENUE SHARING**

- Support a baseline floor of \$60 million annually, and encourage a long-term, sustainable solution.
- Support a method to waive debt, forgive loans, or otherwise bolster "stressed" communities.

#### **PERS/TRS CHANGES**

- Support amendments to termination studies and penalties for leaving PERS/TRS.
- Support the development of a pathway to decrease overall unfunded liability.
- Oppose any cost shift of the State "on behalf" payment over 22%, or any other changes that haven't been negotiated and agreed to by municipalities.

#### **FISCAL POLICY**

- Support agency and programmatic efficiency and right-sizing, but oppose cost-shifting to municipalities and eliminating essential services.
- Support the development of a broad-based tax to increase state revenue.
- Interest rate penalties found in AS 26.45.500(b) should be consistent with market rates.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

- Increase tools available for public safety official recruitment and retention.
- Support and strengthen the VPSO program.
- Support state efforts to decrease access to and impacts from opioids.
- Increase state funding of community jails.
- Fund the administrative costs of municipal hosting of E911 systems.

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- Support increased investment in infrastructure development, which facilitates economic growth.
- Support increased investment in training and workforce development.
- Support state responsiveness to local economic development planning, including local economic diversification and small business development strategies.

## **EDUCATION**

- Support early childhood education, career and technical education, and preparing, attracting and retaining qualified educators.
- Support for accountability and assessment that meets federal requirements and maximizes local control.
- Oppose any reduction in school funding and support investment in infrastructure and deferred maintenance.
- Support amendments to the funding formula removing penalties for consolidation of school facilities within a district.
- Oppose forced consolidation of school districts.
- Oppose the elimination of the school bond debt reimbursement program, and any reductions to previous reimbursement commitments.
- Support a sustainable university system capable of delivering educational opportunities, workforce development, and credible research.

## **FISHERIES**

- Support for appropriately funded DF&G and increased investment in fisheries monitoring, research and outreach.
- Support continued investment in port and harbor infrastructure.
- Support reinstatement of the Harbor Matching Grant program, partially fulfilling the state's obligation for maintenance of harbors transferred into municipal ownership.
- Support an active role in federal fisheries management, and clean water, as well as transboundary negotiations.

## **ENERGY**

- 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

## **TRANSPORTATION**

- Support State investment that can be used to match or supplement federal funding.
- Support increases to the State capital budget, including through a mechanism such as general obligation bonds.
- Support a sustainable ferry system that continues basic, year-round, ferry service to coastal communities.

## **MINERALS**

- Support responsible resource development and the reduction of investment barriers alongside improved environmental risk management.

## **WATER, WASTEWATER AND SANITATION**

- Support increased State investment in maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.
- Support reinstatement of the Municipal Matching Grant program to help municipalities match or supplement local and federal funding.