

2025 STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Support Local Housing and Child Care Needs

The Valdez City Council has identified housing and child care as their top two priorities. Valdez has been working hard on local initiatives and trying to find ways to support projects in both areas, but addressing these dual crises will require ongoing support from all levels of government.

- Maintain and expand funding for direct aid to communities in addressing housing scarcity and affordability issues.
- Help local providers navigate the licensing process.
- Establish a statewide organization to allow child care professionals access to health insurance, benefits and administrative support.
- Support flexibility in how individual communities approach child care and housing challenges.

Adequately Fund Public Education

Support for education accounts for 19% of the city's annual appropriations. We urge the Alaska Legislature and the Governor to fund K-12 education adequately and equitably in Alaska as the Alaska Constitution mandates.

- Increase the Base Student Allocation by passing HB 69, SB 46, or a similar bill.
- Provide robust funding for School Bond Debt Reimbursement and the School Major Maintenance Grant Program.

Increase Local Control in Municipal Property Taxation

Assessed values of homes have dramatically increased in Valdez, and state law significantly limits how local governments can respond to offer taxpayers some relief.

- Reexamine AS 29.45 governing property taxation by local governments in Alaska.
- Add flexibility in allowable local tax exemptions, especially for residential properties.

Staff and Sustain Valdez Area State Parks

The passive management of thousands of acres of State Park lands around Valdez since 2016 has caused a cost-shift to the City of Valdez and created public safety concerns.

- Valdez area state parks have been receiving record numbers of visitors in recent years.
- Add a full time park ranger position in Valdez.

Keep Our Community Connected with Reliable Transportation Systems

The Richardson Highway and Alaska Marine Highway are lifelines for our community and there are various other state-owned roads, bridges and facilities, including our local airport, in Valdez that require consistent upkeep and attention from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

- Ensure adequate staffing of maintenance positions in Thompson Pass and reduce closures.
- Improve regular ferry service to Valdez.
- Prioritize upkeep of state owned roads and infrastructure.

Stabilize the Public Retirement Systems

The quality of Alaska's Public Retirement System is important for recruiting and retaining public servants, especially our first responders and teachers. We believe the creation of a new defined benefits option within the state retirement system (both PERS and TRS) is desirable and is especially important for attracting high quality professionals to our community. The city urges the legislature to pass SB 27 or a similar measure.

Support Prince William Sound Fisheries

Valdez is home to 41 permit holders and homeport to 91 vessels participating in various commercial fisheries and one of the largest purse seine salmon fisheries in Alaska.

- 2024 marked a year of historically low returns for the commercial salmon fisheries in PWS, with many returns down over 80% compared to average. PWS fishermen need an economic disaster declaration and as much assistance as possible.
- Stable funding for the ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division supports our fisheries' success with the data collection and core functions of this division.
- Funding for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute ensures that our fishermen and processors have access to strong markets.
- COV appreciates the ongoing state support of mariculture in PWS.

Maintain Quality State Services in Valdez

- Significant delays in prosecution of criminal charges by the state is a problem in Valdez that the Court System and Department of Law need to remedy.
- Local Spill Prevention and Response staff help ensure that oil is safely moved through Port Valdez and that resources are available in the event of a major oil spill event.
- The Valdez DMV office allows residents to conduct business without having to travel more than 100 miles.
- Maintaining a wildlife trooper position in Valdez is vital to an orderly fishery and maintains established boundaries for resource protection and marine traffic.
- Keeping the existing staff position for OCS in Valdez helps ensure families in vulnerable positions get needed support.

State Grant Program Priorities

- Regional and Community Jail Funding (DOC)
- Alaska Community Transit Human Service Grant Program (DOT & PF)
- Community-Based Primary Prevention Program Grants (CDVSA) and Child Advocacy Grant (DFCS)
- Recreational Boating Access Program (ADF&G)

COV Capital Project Priorities

- Hermon Hutchens Elementary Roof & Exterior Envelope Replacement – \$9.5M
- Pavement & Utilities Rehabilitation Phase 4 - \$6.6M
- Valdez Harbor Launch Ramp Replacement - \$4.2M
- Public Safety Radio Network and Equipment Replacement - \$4M

DOT& PF Capital Project Priorities

- Mineral Creek Loop Road Resurfacing - \$2M
- Resurfacing and Lighting Improvements on Hazelet Ave. - \$5M
- Mineral Creek Bailey Bridge Replacement - \$2M
- Allison Point Pedestrian Pathways- \$2M
- Richardson Highway Resurfacing & Safety Improvements (Airport Rd. to Dayville Rd.)