

2024 City of Valdez Council Priorities

Objective: Improve Legislative Strategy

- Focus on relationships and top-of-mind priorities.
- Develop more state and federal relationships.
 - Conduct more follow-up throughout the year.
 - CHCG will assist the City of Valdez on developing a consistent timeline for Washington, D.C. visits in relation to the Congressional schedule.
 - CHCG proposes two Washington, D.C. visits a year. The first visit is recommended to occur in February or March to coincide with Appropriations requests deadlines so representatives from the City can advocate for their request. The second visit is recommended towards the end of the year, October – November, to again advocate for the City’s legislative priorities that usually are included in year-end legislation and to prepare for the next fiscal year Appropriations cycle.
 - Ask for something specific.
 - State: Keep informed more frequently (re: Valdez focus and priorities)
 - Provide brief sheet: Council priorities.
 - Federal: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) opportunities.
 - Consider: Can we pursue more rural programs?
 - Can we pursue more large city programs?
 - How do Valdez demographics and geography align with existing federal funding programs?
 - Develop a to-do annual plan for state legislative strategy that is aligned with federal legislative priorities.

Draft Federal Legislative Priorities

1. **USCG: Future of Cutter:** With the Coast Guard informing Valdez about the retirement of the cutter what's next.
 - Senators Murkowski and Sullivan have been working with CHCG and the City on options to save the overall Coast Guard presence in Valdez, including finding a replacement for the current cutter. They have sent letters to the Commandant, questioned her in committees and traveled with her driving home the importance of Valdez and the USCG, the need for a ship to handle TAPS, ammunition transport, weather and a host of other issues. The door has not been shut on a replacement and our job will be to open it and find a suitable replacement.
 - CHCG will need to consult and get direction from the City on how they wish to proceed.
2. **Childcare Needs:** Working to address the childcare crisis in Valdez through federal and state funding opportunities to ensure there are adequate childcare services.
 - CHCG and the City of Valdez submitted a Community Funding Project request to Senator Murkowski’s office to help address childcare needs in the City.

Senator Murkowski was able to secure \$3 million for Valdez in the FY24 Appropriations bill. Congress is continuing to debate the FY24 Appropriations bills and CHCG is keeping the City informed on the status of negotiations.

3. **Housing Shortage:** Continuing to offer and explore solutions to address the housing shortage in Valdez.
 - CHCG and the City have informed the delegation about the housing shortage in Valdez and the City's ability to be part of the solution. Senators Murkowski and Sullivan have expressed willingness to look into the Coast Guard's budget to attempt to get a housing project for the City added.
4. **Climate Change and Environmental Protection:** Addressing the immediate impact of climate change on Valdez's coastal ecosystems, including protection of glaciers and marine life. Prioritize funding for climate resilience projects in Valdez.
 - The White House has been aggressive in funding climate initiatives through most of the legislative priorities from annual appropriations bills to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). CHCG remains vigilant in finding opportunities for the City to tap into rural and coastal climate programs.
 - CHCG will continue to monitor hearing and provide memo updates on legislation that could benefit Valdez.
5. **Sustainable Resource Management:** Support legislation that promotes sustainable fisheries management in the Prince William Sound, timber conservation, and wildlife protection in the Valdez area.
 - Reauthorization of the Magnus-Stevens Fisheries Management Conservation Act, which is always hotly contested, hasn't been reauthorized since 2007. However, there are amendments added to the act almost every year. This is an opportunity to evaluate possible changes that could be beneficial to Prince William Sound and sometimes equally important is to stop harmful legislation.
 - The same strategy will be applied to timber and wildlife protection.
6. **Infrastructure Investment:** Advocate for federal funding to improve and maintain Valdez's local infrastructure, including roads, bridges, ports, and modernizing the Valdez Marine Terminal for economic growth and environmental safety.
 - The Water Resources and Management Act (WRDA) was last reauthorized in 2022. This bill authorizes U.S. Army Corps projects across the country. Congress will again begin working on the next WRDA bill, providing an opportunity to include new projects such as updating/rebuilding the ferry terminal.
 - CHCG will also pursue annual appropriations funding for community development projects in Valdez, which includes infrastructure funding.
7. **Economic Development:** Pursue federal initiatives that support economic diversification in Valdez, particularly in areas such as tourism, sustainable energy, and harbor expansion to facilitate economic growth and job creation.
 - CHCG, Valdez, the U.S. Forest Service and possibly some Native organizations are working collectively towards building a Forest Service Visitors Center in

Valdez. The goal is to increase tourism and the visitors' experience.

8. **Healthcare Access:** Seek federal support to improve healthcare access in Valdez, including funding for healthcare facilities, telemedicine services, and addressing healthcare workforce shortages in remote areas.
 - CHCG is intensely involved in healthcare policy as it is the biggest portfolio in our firm. We continually monitor health legislation and are always looking for ways to help smaller rural communities, actively engaged in multiple federal telemedicine internet programs.
9. **Tribal Sovereignty and Self-Determination:** Support legislation that addresses the unique needs of the Valdez Native community.
 - CHCG represents multiple Native communities and organizations in Alaska. We are sensitive to Native needs and are always monitoring any legislation that would impact Alaska's Native Communities.
10. **Arctic Policy:** Advocate for policies that recognize Valdez's position as a strategic Arctic gateway and promote sustainable development, environmental conservation, and infrastructure improvements to support increased Arctic activity.
 - This topic will take planning. The Arctic is becoming more prevalent in members minds for a host of reasons, including Senator Sullivan's determination to educate members on the resources and national security concerns as Russia continues to build out the Arctic. There will be legislative opportunities to address the Arctic, the goal is to make sure Valdez's concerns or support are heard and addressed.
11. **Education and Workforce Development:** Promote federal funding for educational and vocational training programs in Valdez, specifically tailored to the needs of the local workforce and industries, including maritime and environmental management.
 - With the high price of a college degree, many in Congress have realized trade and vocational schools have been forgotten to a degree, and we have a serious lack of trained and skilled workers in this country. As Congress continues to address this disparity we will work with the City, Congressional Delegation and other members of Congress to make sure Valdez has a place at the table.
12. **Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Prioritize federal assistance for disaster preparedness and response in Valdez, focusing on the city's vulnerability to natural disasters and the potential impacts of climate change.
 - Was the City's Emergency Response Plan developed with FEMA? CHCG and the City will need to discuss next steps to ensure Valdez is eligible for all federal resources in both preparation and response.
13. **Valdez Native Land Rights:** Support legislation that upholds the land rights and cultural heritage of the indigenous communities in the Valdez area, including protection of ancestral lands and natural resources.
 - Legislation dealing with Native land rights is usually developed by the Native organization and the delegation. We will monitor and discuss with the City any legislation that would impact the area. CHCG will look to the City for direction,

but we can be helpful because of our Alaska Native friends and contacts at many of the local, village and Native corporations.

Draft Federal Strategic Goals

- **Strategic Goal USCG:** Continue to work with Congressional delegation and Coast Guard to find an appropriate replacement for the current cutter.
- **Strategic Goal 1: Environmental Stewardship and Climate Resilience**
 - Action 1: Advocate for federal funding to address the impacts of climate change on Alaska's environment, including coastal erosion, permafrost degradation, and loss of sea ice.
 - Action 2: Support legislation that enhances environmental protections for Alaska's land, water, and wildlife, emphasizing the preservation of pristine natural areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.
 - Action 3: Engage in collaborative efforts with federal agencies to promote sustainable development, conservation, and adaptive infrastructure planning in response to changing environmental conditions.
- **Strategic Goal 2: Economic Development and Infrastructure Modernization**
 - Action 1: Pursue federal investment in critical infrastructure projects to improve transportation networks, broadband connectivity, and energy infrastructure, particularly in rural and remote areas.
 - Action 2: Advocate for policies and funding to support responsible resource development, sustainable fisheries management, and diversification of Alaska's economy through innovation and entrepreneurship.
 - Action 3: Promote federal initiatives aimed at increasing job opportunities, workforce training, and economic diversification, with a focus on rural and indigenous communities.
- **Strategic Goal 3: Healthcare Access and Public Health**
 - Action 1: Seek federal support to enhance access to quality healthcare services, including mental health care, addiction treatment, and telehealth services, especially in underserved regions of Alaska.
 - Action 2: Support initiatives to address healthcare workforce shortages, improve healthcare infrastructure, and strengthen public health preparedness and response capabilities across the state.
 - Action 3: Advocate for federal policies that recognize and address the unique healthcare needs of Alaska Native communities, focusing on cultural competency and holistic wellness.
- **Strategic Goal 4: Tribal Sovereignty, Cultural Preservation, and Education**
 - Action 1: Uphold and advance the sovereign rights of Alaska Native tribes, advocating for federal legislation that reinforces tribal self-governance and sovereignty over lands and resources.
 - Action 2: Support federal investment in education programs that promote indigenous language preservation, cultural heritage, and traditional knowledge,

while providing equitable access to quality education for all Alaskan students.

- Action 3: Engage in collaborative efforts to address historic trauma, promote healing, and strengthen the capacity of tribal communities to address social and economic challenges.

- **Strategic Goal 5: Preparedness, Security, and Arctic Leadership**
 - Action 1: Prioritize federal support for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, particularly in light of Alaska's unique vulnerability to natural disasters and climate-related events.
 - Action 2: Advocate for Arctic policies that prioritize environmental stewardship, sustainable development, and strategic investments in critical infrastructure to bolster Alaska's role as a leader in Arctic affairs.
 - Action 3: Engage in security cooperation efforts with federal agencies to enhance the security and resilience of Alaska's communities and critical assets in the face of evolving geopolitical and environmental challenge.