



City of Valdez, Alaska 2017 State Legislative Priorities

KEY:

- ❖ = AML Adopted Resolutions
- ✓ = City of Valdez Priorities

State Legislation/Regulation/Programmatic Priorities:

- ❖ Legislative Adoption of Sustainable Budget Plan: The Alaska Municipal League supports a Legislative adoption of a sustainable budget plan that does not rely primarily on cuts, but on new sources of revenues. We feel that the leaders of our State must immediately adopt changes that stop the bleeding that we are currently experiencing. Despite the cuts experienced this last year by local governments, municipalities must continue to provide basic and essential services. The Alaska Municipal League stands behind their updated FY 2017 Sustainability Plan and encourages the Legislature to quickly take action. As more responsibilities are passed down to the “political subdivisions” of the state, municipalities must be given the tools to provide for themselves.
- ❖ Revenue Sharing (Community Assistance): The Alaska Municipal League realizes that the State is in a fiscal crisis. We have attempted to work with the Legislature through the decrease of Revenue Sharing by half. We cannot agree to the ending of Revenue Sharing. However, as our Revenue Sharing goes down and as the State continues to cost shift to municipalities, many local governments will find themselves in the position of closing their doors. The current \$30 million is a small part of the yearly state budget. With the recent loss of Timber Receipts and the potential loss of PILT, a sustainable and predictable allocation is necessary for municipal budget purposes. This money allows for the provision of basic local services and as a means to keep taxes down.
- ❖ PERS/TRS: The Alaska Municipal League recently fought back a proposal by the Alaska State Legislature that would have seen municipalities acquire a larger percentage of the PERS/TRS unfunded liability. The PERS/TRS system is the legal and moral responsibility of the State, as it is THEIR program. Municipalities simply pay an amount set by the State in order to be participants in the plan. We do not provide retirement benefits; we do not have a say in any of the fiduciary decisions.

AML and its member municipalities will hold fast to the previously agreed upon 22% of salary towards the pay down of the unfunded liability.

- ✓ Statewide Energy Policy: The City of Valdez supports the efforts of the Legislature to develop a Statewide Energy Policy and Plan. The high cost of energy is the single-biggest barrier in Alaska to enjoying a reasonable standard of living and growth in the economy. Work in this arena should address the needs of the entire state, looking at both renewable and non-renewable energy sources. And, as progress continues on a large diameter LNG pipeline, the State must also concurrently develop a comprehensive strategy to maximize the distribution of that energy outside the pipeline corridor, and to dedicate appropriate revenues from the sale of that gas to support other energy projects serving all areas of Alaska.
- ✓ Alaska Marine Highway System: The City of Valdez supports the findings of the AMHS Governance Study Phase 1 Report overseen by Southeast Conference. The recommended governance model includes 1) creation of a public corporation to manage AMHS; 2) maintain State ownership of AMHS assets; and 3) interim enhancement as Line Agency of State Government. Given these findings, the Phase 1 Report recommends the following for a Phase 2 Strategic Operational & Business Plan Development: a) a thorough financial review of operations; b) an assessment of funding sources and cost saving measures; and c) an optimization of potential fleet standardization, ferry schedules and management processes. The City of Valdez is committed to finding a statewide solution for AMHS and has contributed \$10,000 to this effort.
- ✓ Alaska Tourism Marketing: The City of Valdez encourages a strong investment by the State of Alaska in a Statewide Tourism Marketing Program. Tourism marketing funding is down from \$18 million four years ago to just \$1.5 million in FY17. Valdez supports the efforts that the Alaska Travel Industry and the Alaska Tourism Marketing Board are taking to create a new sustainable marketing funding formula in the form of a Tourism Investment District.
- ❖ State Harbor Grants: The state has established a Harbor Facility Grant program (AS 29.60.800) to provide 50% of construction costs for local harbor maintenance and upgrade projects. Local governments must fund all design costs and half the construction cost. In an environment of shrinking capital dollars, this program should be fully funded by the state as it evaluates projects against standard criteria for prioritization and significantly leverages available state funding. The City's application this year is requesting \$5 million to the City's match of \$6.850 million. If funding the grant program is not possible, the City encourages the State to bond for port and harbor projects as a means to further strengthen these economic engines around Alaska.
- ✓ Community Jails: Maintain funding at the 2017 level. Continue working with the Department of Corrections to implement electronic monitoring for both

post-conviction and pre-trial releases. Strive towards a local model of supervision and identify additional areas in which the community jail can better be utilized to maximize efficiency, diversify services provided, and partner with the State of Alaska to produce the most cost effective solution.

- ❖ Real Property Sales Disclosure: The Alaska Association of Assessing Officers (AAAO) overall goal is to promote the fair and equitable distribution of the property tax burden which funds local governments.
- ❖ Provisions for Enhanced Local Control in the Issuance of Alcohol Beverage Licenses and Permits within First Class and Home Rule Municipalities: Amendments to Title 4 of the Alaska State Statutes which would provide for maximum local self-government to include establishing a mechanism for first class and home rule municipalities to participate in determining the appropriate number and types of alcoholic beverage licenses and permits in their communities.
- ~~❖ Adopt the Following Fine Print Note to the 2017 National Electrical Code Article 555.3: “FPN: The 30mA requirement can be applied to all feeder circuits or all branch circuits in lieu of the main overcurrent protection device.”~~
- ❖ Support of Proposed Changes to Alaska Statutes Chapter 30.30 and 05.25 Improving the Management and Prevention of Derelict Vessels: The proposed changes will improve communication and coordination between Alaska’s harbors and state and federal agencies, directly leading to decreased costs associated with managing derelict vessels.
 - ✓ Maintaining Local Alaska Wildlife Trooper Position: Maintaining the Valdez post for an Alaska Wildlife Trooper (AWT) is vitally important to the regional fishing community of Valdez and Prince William Sound. Valdez is home to 41 permit holders and homeport to 91 vessels participating in various commercial fisheries. The local AWT provides:
 - Regulation enforcement and protection of wild and hatchery fishery resources in Valdez and Prince William Sound. Port Valdez and Valdez Arm are home to one of the largest purse seine salmon fisheries in Alaska. Up to 200 commercial vessels fish each summer in close proximity to the Solomon Gulch Hatchery, the Alyeska Marine Terminal and regulatory closed waters. The on-water presence of the Valdez AWT is essential to ensure an orderly fishery and maintain established boundaries for resource protection and marine traffic.
 - Regional enforcement of hunting regulations in Prince William Sound and the Copper Basin
 - Local Valdez fishery registration, administrative and education needs.

As it the position relates to interagency work with the Valdez Police Department (VPD) having the AWT stationed in Valdez is not a luxury – it is a necessity. The local AWT is responsible for enforcement of area fishing and hunting regulations.

Without this on-water presence there would be no enforcement as the VPD lacks both the vessel and personnel to staff it.

The local AWT acts as a liaison and resource for the VPD to contact larger State resources when necessary. Without this position the closest law enforcement officer, other than VPD, is a State Trooper (AST) stationed in Glennallen – 120 miles away. Often this distance is further as AST jurisdiction out of Glennallen reaches as far away as Paxson, Palmer and Tok.

VPD Dispatch is contracted to dispatch calls to the local AWT. This means he is able to hear radio traffic and activity of the VPD. Correspondingly, VPD is tied into the AWT radio traffic as well. This provides a measure of local knowledge and security when he must individually contact people. The AWT is also routinely used as a force multiplier during more significant events. He is locally trained to help respond to Active Shooter and Domestic Violence situations.

- ✓ Alaska Department of Fish & Game Budget: The Legislature must recognize the need for a balanced approach to budget reductions that create minimal impacts on the core functions of fisheries resource management. Valdez and Prince William Sound fishermen rely on these functions to provide for maximum fishing opportunity and sustainable resource management. Key elements include:
 - Maintaining adequate staffing levels in Prince William Sound to provide for effective and dedicated fisheries management;
 - Full funding for in-season data collection through aerial surveys, stream assessments and other methods. This establishes accurate in-season reporting to provide the tools necessary to maximize fishing time and area for Valdez and PWS fishermen;
 - Ensure budget reductions do not reduce or eliminate economic opportunity for industry and resource users; and
 - Continued support for ongoing research projects.

- ✓ Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute: The functions and programs of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) are vital to the promotion of Alaska's seafood resources and the development of new markets for local seafood producers. Any future budget reductions must fully consider the impacts to ASMI's ability to effectively promote the benefits and sustainability of Alaska's seafood products.

- ✓ Changes to Public Notification: Many areas of State law require printed format for public notification. Efficiencies can be gained by both the State and municipalities if governments throughout Alaska can move to online postings for items ranging from foreclosure listings to meeting notices.

Other Ongoing Important Issues:

South Central Alaska Port Maximization – The Port of Anchorage is a critical port; however the staggering capital and maintenance costs of this port are excessive and non-sustainable. It also puts all our eggs in one basket in the event of a disaster and fails to spread jobs and economic impact to other areas of the state. The infrastructure exists in other South Central Alaska ports (like Seward and Valdez - especially for Interior Alaska) to diversify this traffic. A more strategic allocation of resources is needed to develop and sustain port networks. The State is encouraged to evaluate cost benefit ratios for investing in other South Central ports before allocating such huge sums of money to only Cook Inlet.

East Alaska (Richardson Highway) Transportation Corridor – The State is encouraged to recognize the strategic importance of improving and maintaining the infrastructure of the East Alaska Transportation Corridor (Richardson Highway). In the event of any emergency that resulted in the incapacity of the Parks Highway Corridor, alternate means for connecting the state must remain available. Developing and maintaining this capacity will require a long-term commitment to allocate resources appropriately. To this end, the City of Valdez supports the AML position calling for the dedication of funds for the Alaska Transportation Infrastructure Fund and within such a fund, an increased importance placed on the strategic investment of resources to include necessary maintenance and upgrades to the Richardson Highway.

Education Priorities:

The City of Valdez fully supports the priorities outlined by Valdez City Schools. More complete descriptions of these Five critical issues are attached to this document and are herein incorporated as part of this Legislative Priorities document:

- TRS/PERS;
- Extend Reserves beyond 10%;
- Intensive Services Funding portability;
- Predictable funding (keeping the School District whole); and
- Early Childhood Funding