



**Alaska Municipal League
66th Annual Local Government Conference
Legislative Strategy Packet**

Resolution Procedures & Guidelines

Draft 2017 State & Federal Priorities

Draft 2017 AML Resolutions

Position Statement Guidelines

Draft 2017 Position Statements

Resolutions Supporting Changes to
Position Statements (none submitted)

ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

AML RESOLUTIONS PROCEDURE

A resolution is a statement of the Alaska Municipal League's intent to support a specific action on a significant issue affecting municipalities. Resolutions are introduced, debated, and adopted by the AML members each year at the Annual Local Government Conference. To be considered during the conference, resolutions must conform to the following policy, procedural and format guidelines which were adopted by the AML Board in August, 2007. Resolutions should be received in the AML office electronically, by mail, or fax no later than October 7, 2016.

RESOLUTION GUIDELINES

1. Resolutions shall concern shared policy and program needs, issues, or problems of Alaska municipalities and shall state the problem and action sought.
 - A. Resolutions may not conflict with any adopted AML positions.
 - B. Resolutions that allow conflict between one community against another will be eliminated.
 - C. Resolutions will be revised to make a general application instead of one seeking to benefit a specific community only; especially if the benefit to that one community would be at the expense of another community (i.e. support relocating a state office from city to city).
 - D. Resolutions with the same topic will be combined.
2. Resolutions shall be restricted to action-specific issues and issues of some immediacy and shall be sent to the Governor, Legislature, State Agency, President and/or the Congress.
3. Resolutions differ from priorities in that:
 - A. Resolutions shall address specific issues rather than general policy.
 - B. Resolutions may address regional issues as well as statewide concerns.
 - C. Resolutions shall be in effect for only one year. They are intended to address timely issues such as current legislative proposals.

HOW TO SUBMIT A RESOLUTION

1. Only councils and assemblies of member municipalities, affiliated municipal associations, affiliated regional municipal organizations (comprised of municipal officials), the AML Board and the Alaska Conference of Mayors are eligible to submit resolutions for consideration. Each resolution submitted must have been approved by a formal action of the sponsoring body.
2. Resolutions should be mailed, faxed or emailed by October 7, 2016 to be included in the delegate packets for consideration during the conference. Resolutions must follow format guidelines. Copies of the resolutions will be made available to the delegates in their registration packets.
3. Resolutions not submitted by October 7 may be offered to the Resolution Committee on November 16th at 5:00 p.m., for consideration during the conference. However, the sponsor of any resolution presented directly to the Resolution Committee must have the support of representatives of five (5) member municipalities in attendance at the conference and be in proper format. In addition, if the Resolution Committee accepts the late resolution, the sponsor must make copies available for the business meeting on Friday, November 18, 2016.
4. Resolutions will be reviewed, debated and acted upon by the AML Membership at the Annual Conference Business Meeting. Sponsors of properly submitted resolutions will be given an opportunity to discuss and support their resolutions at the meeting.
5. The First Vice-President shall serve as Chair of the Resolutions Committee and shall appoint eight (8) additional elected and appointed municipal officials from the AML Board.

6. The Resolutions Committee shall debate and act upon each resolution for final recommendation to the membership. The Resolutions Committee shall approve, amend, or reject each resolution submitted, note its action, and, if the resolution is approved, send it to the business meeting for consideration. If a resolution is rejected, the committee shall prepare a brief written justification of its action and forward that information to the business meeting.
7. A resolution rejected by the Resolution Committee may be brought to the floor of the business meeting at the appropriate time, only if it is signed by representatives from twenty (20) member municipalities. No new resolutions may be submitted to the business meeting without first going to the Resolution Committee.

RESOLUTIONS FORMAT

The resolution must be in the proper format. The name of the sponsoring member municipality or association and the date of submission must be indicated on the bottom of the resolution. Each resolution must include the statement, “This resolution was approved for submission to the Alaska Municipal League membership by the governing body of (name of Municipality or association) on (date)” in the lower left-hand corner. Resolutions can be emailed to kathie@akml.org or submitted via disk or data stick.

Each resolution submitted must indicate that it is a “Resolution of the Alaska Municipal League, Resolution #2017-xx and have a title, beginning, “A Resolution ...” that describes the issue and intent of the resolution. Throughout the text, the resolution should indicate that the League is taking the position advocated, not a given municipality or organization.

At least one “Whereas” clause should identify the policies in the AML Position Statement that the resolution addresses (i.e., expands or supplements), if applicable.

**ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE
RESOLUTION #2017-__**

A RESOLUTION _____

WHEREAS, _____

_____ ;and

WHEREAS, _____

_____ ;and

WHEREAS, _____

_____ ;and

WHEREAS, _____

_____ ;and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Alaska Municipal League _____

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ON THE _____ DAY OF _____, 2016.

Signed: _____
President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: _____
Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by:	Date Submitted:
Contact Name:	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



**ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE
DRAFT
FY 2017 STATEWIDE PRIORITIES**

- **LEGISLATIVE ADOPTION OF A 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.



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE
Draft
FY 2017 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- **SUPPORT PILT AND SRS**

The Alaska Municipal League supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates municipalities for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries. The Alaska Municipal League also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and school.

- **PROTECT MUNICIPAL BONDS**

The Alaska Municipal League supports preserving the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes and the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure and development. Provisions like the tax exemption for municipal bond interest have been part of the federal tax code for over 100 years, helping finance trillions of dollars in public works projects.

- **PRESERVE MUNICIPAL INTERESTS IN “WATERS OF THE U.S.” REGULATIONS**

The Alaska Municipal League believes that local streets, gutters and human-made ditches should be excluded from the definition of “Waters of the U.S.,” under the federal Clean Water Act. The Alaska Municipal League calls on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the new rule and rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

- **PROMOTE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES IN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION**

The Alaska Municipal League will work to ensure that the new surface transportation law is implemented to reflect municipal priorities, including allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision making authority, prioritizing investments that increase safety, as well as continuing to urge Congress to resolve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41

ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-01

**A RESOLUTION URGING THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE TO ADOPT A
SUSTAINABLE BUDGET PLAN FOR FY18 AND BEYOND; TO CAREFULLY
CONCENTRATE ON INCREASED REVENUES RATHER THAN JUST CUTS; AND
TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
SUBMITTED BY THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE**

WHEREAS, due to the continued plunge in the price of oil, coupled with the decreased amount of oil flowing through the pipeline, the State of Alaska continues to find itself in a huge budget deficit situation for FY18; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature alleviated some of the problem through a number of cuts to government provisions and services; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature also basically cut down the capital budget to necessities only; and

WHEREAS, cutting across the board alone will not solve our fiscal challenge and will only serve to push our state into an economic recession; and

WHEREAS, there is no longer sufficient balances in the Constitutional Budget Reserve to cover next years' projected budget deficit, which will for the first time, likely require the use of the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve to help fund state government operations; and

WHEREAS, municipal Revenue Sharing has been reduced by 50%; an additional \$2.5 billion in PERS liability costs have been shifted to municipalities; school debt reimbursement has been significantly reduced; airport funding, community jails, road maintenance, the capital budget, and infrastructure support has been reduced or eliminated; and it appears that other cost shifts are on the horizon; and

WHEREAS, Alaska's local governments have also lost Secure Funding for Rural Schools (Timber Receipts) and might yet be faced with the depletion of federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes funding (PILT); and

WHEREAS, In February of 2015, the President of AML created an ad hoc committee to address this issue from the perspective of local government; and

1 **WHEREAS**, this committee is cognizant of the fact that municipalities must have a
2 sustainable commitment from the Legislature in order for municipalities to remain
3 sustainable; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, despite a fiscal challenge, municipalities must continue to provide basic and
6 essential services; and
7

8 **WHEREAS**, with these facts in mind, and taking into consideration what happened last
9 session, the Sustainability Committee has revisited their Sustainability Plan from the
10 perspective of Alaska’s local governments; and
11

12 **WHEREAS**, AML believes that the leaders of our state should immediately adopt changes
13 in the manner with which the State of Alaska raises revenues, while continuing to watch
14 for situations of obvious government waste or redundancy; and
15

16 **WHEREAS**, AML believes that the lack of new state revenues, as part of a balanced fiscal
17 plan, will force additional state budget cuts to programs such as the municipal school debt
18 reimbursement program, PERS/TRS state on-behalf payments for municipalities, state
19 funding for the BSA education formula, as well as other current state functions that will
20 “roll downhill,” becoming the responsibility of municipal governments to fund; and
21

22 **WHEREAS**, at the same time, Alaska’s local governments realize that the state and
23 federal government will no longer be able to fund local government as in the past; and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, as more responsibilities are passed down to the subdivisions of the state
26 during this fiscal challenge, local governments must be given the “tools” to make this work
27 as well as possible.
28

29 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League urges the
30 Alaska Legislature to adopt a sustainable budget plan for FY18 and beyond; to carefully
31 concentrate on increased revenues rather than just cuts; and to give serious
32 consideration to the Sustainability Plan submitted by the Alaska Municipal League. AML
33 also calls upon every member municipality to actively engage with the Legislature and
34 the Administration during the Legislative process throughout the entire session of the 30th
35 Alaska State Legislature
36

37 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
38 November, 2016.
39
40

41 Signed: _____
42 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: AML Board of Directors	Date Submitted: 09/16
Contact Name: Kathie Wasserman	Contact Phone #: 586-1325
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	

12
13
14



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-02

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OPPOSING A STATE SALES TAX

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the State of Alaska is in a severe financial crisis and long-term solutions must be found; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for reduced spending and increased revenue by the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, one proposal calls for a state sales tax; and

WHEREAS, the Governor had previously submitted legislation that, if adopted, would have created a state sales tax; and

WHEREAS, the majority of Alaskan municipalities rely primarily on a sales tax (110 out of 164); and

WHEREAS, an additional state sales tax would be an enormous burden upon the people of Alaska, especially those in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, an additional state sales tax would inhibit the ability of Alaska's municipalities to raise needed revenue for local services; and

WHEREAS, there appear to be other revenue proposals that the State of Alaska could adopt that would have less negative impact on municipalities and the people of Alaska.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League opposes the creation of a state sales and use tax.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of November, 2016.

Signed: _____
Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: City of Bethel	Date Submitted: 08/16
Contact Name: Mayor Rick Robb	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE SUPPORTING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM REFORM

WHEREAS, most of Alaska’s municipalities contribute to the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS); and

WHEREAS, included in SB 125 in 2008, was language requiring municipalities to pay for a termination study and ensuring costs upon the termination of a “department, group or classification” of employees; and

WHEREAS, also included in SB 125, was language requiring municipalities to pay a penalty when and if their salary base went below the 2008 salary base; and

WHEREAS, termination study costs must be paid to the state actuarial company plus the past service cost for those positions for the next 30 years; and

WHEREAS, if the municipal total base salary falls below what it was in 2008, charges will be assessed on that drop; and

WHEREAS, in light of the financial situation, municipalities will most likely have to lay off more people than usual; resulting in higher costs; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska will also be facing more layoffs than usual and the state has exempted themselves from these costs; and

WHEREAS, these rules severely limit the ability of municipalities from being agile with regards to their workforce and tends to prohibit wise financial choices; and

WHEREAS, these rules also severely limit municipalities from creating new needed departments, groups or classifications for fear of future termination study costs; and

WHEREAS, municipalities require agility and adaptability in the workforce to meet our changing needs; and

WHEREAS, with our current state fiscal crisis, municipalities may need to make reductions or increases in the workforce, including entire departments, groups or classifications of employees; and

1 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League supports
 2 reform in the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS). These reforms might include
 3 eliminating termination studies or requiring the State to also pay termination study costs
 4 for reducing or eliminating departments, groups or classifications of employees.

5
 6 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
 7 November, 2016.

8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26

Signed: _____
 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: _____
 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: City of Bethel	Date Submitted: 08/16
Contact Name: Mayor Rick Robb	Contact Phone #
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-04

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING LEGISLATION ADOPTING REAL PROPERTY SALES DISCLOSURE IN ALASKA

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, the goals of AAAO include education of government officials and the public on the assessment process and the importance of achieving fair and equitable values of real property within all taxing jurisdictions in the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, as Assessor is required, per AS 29.45.110, to assess all property at full and true value as of January 1 of the assessment year. The full and true value is the estimated price that the property would bring in an open market and under the then prevailing market conditions in a sale between a willing seller and a willing buyer both conversant with the property and with prevailing general price levels; and

WHEREAS, while the legal mandate for assessment at full and true value exists, the sales data that is necessary to determine full and true value is not readily available due to the lack of sales disclosure in the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Research Services Division reported in 2014 that Alaska is one of six states for which sales disclosure for property exchanges are not disclosed; and

WHEREAS, sales disclosure would assist in the fair distribution of the tax burden to all taxpayers and would enhance the accuracy and the timeliness of assessments; and

WHEREAS, sales disclosure would enhance the ability of assessment professionals to meet the full and true value mandate and would also aid the public in obtaining information in order to interact within local real estate markets; and

WHEREAS, the lack of sales data in some jurisdictions limits the ability to fairly distribute the tax burden and also to fund local services; and

WHEREAS, sales disclosure would enable property owners to gather data to provide support for legally entitled property tax appeal under Alaska Statute 29.45.190.

1 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League urges the
 2 Alaska State Legislature to enact legislation requiring disclosure of all real property sales
 3 in the State of Alaska.

4
 5 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
 6 November, 2016.

7
 8
 9

10 Signed: _____
 11 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

12
 13
 14

15 Attest: _____
 16 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28

Submitted by: Alaska Association of Assessing Officers	
	Date Submitted: 08/16
Contact Name: Marty McGee	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-05

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE STRONGLY
ENCOURAGING AN AMENDMENT TO AS 39.35.625 TO ELIMINATE
DISCRIMINTORY IMPACTS ON SMALLER COMMUNITIES AND TO STOP THE
SHIFT OF STATE EMPLOYEES PAST SERVICE COSTS TO OTHER EMPLOYERS**

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Legislature, in adopting SB 125 in 2008, adopted a flat rate of 22% of salary to be paid by all of Alaska’s PERS employers to help fund current costs and the unfunded liability of the PERS system; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature, in crafting SB 125, struggled to come up with a fair and equitable solution to a problem that most of them did not create. Further, in crafting SB 125, legislators never envisioned, intended, nor did they want to create any inequitable financial damage to any PERS member employer, nor negatively interfere with the current or future delivery of any member’s services or programs because of SB 125; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature adopted AS 39.35.625 to ensure that employers participating in PERS as of 2008 continued to pay their fair share of the unfunded liability which existed as of that date. This statute set a salary floor for payments at the 2008 salary level, and required continued payments for eliminated positions where the employer terminated participation of a department, group, or other classification of employees in PERS after 2008. The obligation to make payments for eliminated positions has not been applied to the State as an employer; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Administration adopted regulations, including 2 AAC 35.235 in order to implement this statute:

2 AAC 35.235 – Calculation of termination costs states:

“(a) An employer that proposes to terminate coverage of a department, group, or other classification of employees under AS 39.35.615 or 39.35.957, or terminate participation of the employer under AS 39.35.620 or 39.35.958, must have a termination study completed by the plan actuary to determine the actuarial cost to the employer for future benefits due employees whose coverage is terminated;” and

“(b) In addition to the costs calculated in (a).....the employer under AS 39.35.620 or 39.35.958, is required to pay to the plan until the past service liability of the plan is extinguished, an amount calculated by applying the current past service rate adopted by the ARM Board, to salaries of the terminated employees as required by AS 39.35.625 (a). This payment shall be made each payroll period or the employer may enter into a payment plan acceptable to the administration for each

1 fiscal year. The obligation under this section to conduct a termination study and
2 make payments for eliminated positions has not been applied to the State as an
3 employer; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the State of Alaska has reduced its workforce by 6.4% (1,700 employees) in
6 the past 2 fiscal years and is likely to further reduce its workforce. When those reductions
7 are made without the State as an employer being responsible for the lost contributions to
8 the past service cost rate represented by those positions in the same manner as other
9 PERS employers, the effect is to shift a portion of the State's liability as an employer to
10 other employers;¹ and
11

12 **WHEREAS**, equitable and consistent application of the State's termination law does not
13 seem to be occurring, nor likely can it ever occur given the uniqueness of all PERS
14 employers' positions. A law like this that has such a material financial impact on PERS
15 employers should at a minimum be able to be fairly, equitably, and consistently applied
16 to all PERS employers, yet the Division of Retirement and Benefits has taken the position
17 that the State, with half of the PERS salary base, is exempt from termination studies and
18 their financial impacts; and
19

20 **WHEREAS**, there is an inescapably inequitable impact to small PERS employers. This
21 State law, or its application by the Department of Administration, creates a clear and
22 unconscionable inequitable impact on small PERS employers, versus larger PERS
23 employers. A large employer with 20 employees in a classification such as police officer,
24 may eliminate 10 positions with no liability, while a community with one police officer
25 incurs liability if they eliminate the one position, despite the more significant loss to the
26 PERS system from the layoffs in the larger community. Many smaller communities only
27 have "one" employee for a program or service. If the community loses a grant, or is simply
28 faced with budget constraints and has to eliminate a position, for example a public works
29 director or animal protection officer, the employer would be required to have a termination
30 study done, then pay all of the related costs because a "group" was cut; and
31

32 **WHEREAS**, the application of this regulation does not take into account shifts in municipal
33 services which may move employees and salary amounts from one area to another. In
34 other words, the ability for entities to adjust their programs and services to meet their
35 constituent's needs is negatively impacted. If an employer needs to cut in Area A, and
36 add in Area B, that employer could find itself paying the Past Service Cost (PSC) rate
37 times the salary(s) it is no longer paying in Area A because it shifted its employees to
38 Area B where there is more need, whether driven by local need or a mandate; and

¹ 6.4% of the State's FY2014 employer contributions to the past service unfunded liability amounts to over \$6 million. Removing these contributions from the unfunded liability payments increases the overall liability, increases the share of that liability to be reported as a debt of other participating employers, increases the risk of future shortfalls, and could cause further delays in paying off the unfunded liability.

1
2 **WHEREAS**, the Alaska Municipal League believes that the Legislature did not intend that
3 simple changes in the mix of municipal services and shifting employee duties would
4 trigger a significant employer liability for past service cost payments; and
5

6 **WHEREAS**, over time, more and more resources may go toward paying for positions that
7 no longer exist, than go to the delivery of services such as fire protection, law
8 enforcement, teaching, recreational services, landfill services, and the list goes on from
9 here. Once an employer starts shifting employee resources from one area of
10 responsibility to another, it starts a negative downward spiraling in the ability to fund other
11 programs and services; and
12

13 **WHEREAS**, an employer generally will pay more toward the unfunded obligation every
14 pay period on positions that no longer exist than they will for existing paid positions. This
15 is true because the rate set by statute is capped at 22%. The 22% first covers the current
16 normal cost rate and the difference is applied to the unfunded obligation. The Past
17 Service Rate is not capped and is equal to the portion of the 22% which is paid towards
18 the past service liability plus the amount over 22% which is paid by the State as on-behalf
19 payments; and
20

21 **WHEREAS**, termination studies nullify the intent of SB 125, that employers pay the exact
22 same rate. It is clear that one result of these termination studies is that different
23 employers will in fact be paying different net rates and therefore, there will not be a single
24 uniform contribution rate for PERS employers. The adoption of SB 125 was based on the
25 acknowledgement that the State does not have a single-agent, multiple employer PERS
26 system, but rather a consolidated un-equitable cost share system. The intent of SB 125
27 was that all employers would pay the same exact rate. That cannot happen when each
28 employer pays a different termination cost amount or pays none at all.
29

30 **WHEREAS**, if a PERS employer reduces its employees count because it made a decision
31 to alter or suspend one of its programs or services, per 2 AAC 35.235, PERS will send
32 the employer three bills. The first bill will be for the cost of doing a termination study. The
33 second bill will be what the study says is owed the system due to the employee changes
34 made. The third bill, the biggest one, requires the employer to pay the PSC rate on each
35 position's salary that PERS determines has been removed from PERS by voluntary
36 request of the employer or should be removed from PERS (whether voluntarily or
37 involuntarily in response to direction from PERS) due to the change in staffing. The
38 employer will be required to pay the PSC on the salary(s) of the positions (s) PERS
39 determines has been removed (as indicated), until the unfunded obligation is paid off,
40 perhaps 23 years from now. These three bills cumulatively can run from hundreds of
41 thousands of dollars to several millions of dollars; and
42

1 **WHEREAS**, the future financial stability of PERS employers, and their ability to efficiently
2 and effectively manage the delivery of their programs and services is being directly
3 impacted and undermined by this application of AS 39.35.625 and 2 AAC 35.235; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the negative consequences, the additional charges and the payments that
6 result from the termination language, were never contemplated or intended by the
7 legislature and are destructive; and
8

9 **WHEREAS**, the Alaska Municipal League requests that AS 39.35.625, which requires
10 termination studies and past service liability payments for positions whose participation
11 in PERS is terminated, and any other similar statutes or regulations, should be either
12 repealed or modified to apply to all employers, including the State, and to apply in a non-
13 discriminatory manner to reductions in the employer's work force.
14

15 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League strongly
16 encourages an amendment be made to AS 39.35.625 to eliminate discriminatory impacts
17 on smaller communities and treat all PERS employers, including the State, the same by
18 applying the past service cost burdens in a non-discriminatory manner to reductions in
19 the employer's workforce.
20

21 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
22 November, 2016.
23

24
25
26

Signed: _____
Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

27
28
29
30

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

1
2
3
4

Submitted by: Ketchikan Gateway Borough Date Submitted: 09/16

Contact Name: Scott Brandt-Erichsen Contact Phone #:

Implementation Recommendation:

Agencies to Contact:

Funding Required:

Staff/Board/Membership Action:



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-06

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OPPOSING ANY
LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE BURDEN ON PERS AND TRS
EMPLOYERS BEYOND THE CURREN EMPLOYER CONTRIBUTION LIMITS OF
22% FOR PERS AND 12.56% FOR TRS**

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska established the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) in 1961 and since that time has:

1. Had sole administrative control of the plan; and
2. Selected, contracted with and has been the sole contact with PERS actuaries; and
3. Had sole access to oversight for, and responsibility for actuarial methods and assumptions for PERS; and
4. Had sole control over the investment of all PERS assets; and
5. Set the rates for, billed for, and collected on all PERS contributions, and

WHEREAS, the State caused the shifting of employees from cities to boroughs as it formed mandatory boroughs in 1963 and 1964; and

WHEREAS, the State has managed the investment income since 1969 and has credited investment income to employee accounts solely from the current employer's active account, versus directly; and

WHEREAS, the State administratively created the Retirement Reserve Account (RRA) in 1971, although it was not authorized by statute until 1974; and

WHEREAS, the State began paying retiree benefits with "blended" employer dollars in 1971 and absorbed the RRA shortfall balance in 1972; and

WHEREAS, although member employers were told, and believed, from 1961 until approximately 2006, that individual employer retirement accounts and activity were kept and tracked separately by the State since 1971, the State has blended, reallocated and comingled employer contributions such that no single employer's contributions can be accounted for accurately; and

WHEREAS, the comingled nature of the funds creates a statewide system such that one employer's actions affect other employer's liabilities; and

WHEREAS, the State did not administer PERS in accordance with its own laws; and

1
2 **WHEREAS**, the State established the “shared consolidated (blended) normal cost” rate
3 in 1977; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the State started allocating income to the RRA in 1984; and
6

7 **WHEREAS**, in 1994, the State stopped transferring employer contributions to the RRA
8 as employees retired; and
9

10 **WHEREAS**, the State controlled the timing of employee “appointment” to retirement and
11 the subsequent employee account transfers to the RRA; and
12

13 **WHEREAS**, the State reallocated each employers’ and employees’ RRA contributed
14 assets, based upon RRA liabilities; and
15

16 **WHEREAS**, the State determined each employers’ unfunded obligation after reallocating
17 the employer’s assets; and
18

19 **WHEREAS**, the State, prior to 2006, set the employer’s past service cost rates, based
20 upon reallocated asset results; and
21

22 **WHEREAS**, the State, before 2006, set and paid prior normal cost rates that were lower
23 than they should have been; and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, the State, from July 1, 1999 up until as recently as 2006, paid refunds from
26 employee accounts, yet booked payments as though they were coming from the RRA;
27 and
28

29 **WHEREAS**, the State, from July 1, 1999 up until as recently as 2006, sent direct
30 employee accounts, yet booked payments as though they were coming from the RRA;
31 and
32

33 **WHEREAS**, the State has pervasive authority over public education in Alaska, a
34 responsibility which it shares with no other unit of government; and
35

36 **WHEREAS**, in the exercise of its pervasive authority over public education, the State
37 established a Teachers Retirement System (TRS) and statutorily requires that all
38 teachers in public schools be included in that system; and
39

40 **WHEREAS**, the State has prescribed the terms of the TRS system and program since
41 the beginning and has exercised exclusive control over the operation, investment and
42 administration of that system in much the same manner as it has the PERS system; and

1
2 **WHEREAS**, the State does not allow any local school district the discretion to decline to
3 have teachers employed in those districts participate in TRS; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the State has, as with PERS, comingled each district's contributions to TRS
6 and set rates at inadequate levels such that there is no method to accurately allocate the
7 unfunded liability for TRS pension or health benefits to any particular school district; and
8

9 **WHEREAS**, in recognition of the State's responsibility for the majority of the unfunded
10 pension and health benefit liability, in 2008 the State amended its statutes regarding
11 employer contributions to PERS and TRS, placing a cap on employer contributions to
12 PERS at 22% of payroll and on TRS contributions at 12.56% of payroll, with the State
13 accepting responsibility for any costs in excess of this amount. This action substantially
14 reduced the reported individual liability of many communities, and increased the allocation
15 of liability to others. The reallocation of responsibility was acquiesced in by PERS
16 employers and the State in recognition that it was in the best interests of all to settle the
17 allocation of liability and provide certainty of set rates for all employers; and
18

19 **WHEREAS**, in connection with the 2008 legislative change, the Legislature
20 acknowledged State responsibility for the unfunded liability in the TRS system and
21 accepted responsibility, subject to annual appropriation, for payments required to satisfy
22 the TRS and PERS contribution rates required to amortize the unfunded pension liability
23 over 25 years; and
24

25 **WHEREAS**, during the 2016 regular legislative session, the second Regular Session of
26 the 29th Legislature, bills were introduced which would have increased the employer
27 contribution rates for PERS and TRS employers from the rates set in 2008 in accordance
28 with the resolution of the problem the State had in accurately allocating liability to
29 individual employers; and
30

31 **WHEREAS**, the Alaska Municipal League believes that apart from being unfair, any
32 increase from the employer contribution rates sets in 2008 would risk unraveling the
33 resolution of the liability allocation reached in 2008, and could motivate PERS employers
34 to seek to enforce their rights to limit their individual employer liability. Such action would
35 likely cost the State and all employers more in the long run due to the overwhelming costs
36 of sorting out individual employer responsibilities.
37

38 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that he Alaska Municipal League opposes any
39 legislation which would increase the burden on PERS and TRS employers beyond the
40 current employer contribution limits of 22% for PERS and 12.56% for TRS.
41

1 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
2 November, 2016.

3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

Signed: _____
Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: Ketchikan Gateway Borough	Date Submitted: 09/16
Contact Name: Scott Brandt-Erichsen	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-07

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE SUPPORTING ISSUANCE OF PENSION OBLIGATION BONDS (POBS) AND OPPOSING ANY LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD INCREASE THE BURDEN ON EMPLOYERS OR DIMINISH THE STATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ON-BEHALF PAYMENTS OF THE PERS AND TRS UNFUNDED LIABILITY AS A RESULT OF THE ISSUANCE OF PENSION OBLIGATION BONDS

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Alaska Legislature authorized the issuance of Pension Obligation Bonds (POBs) to fund a portion of the unfunded liability of the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) and the Teachers Retirement System (TRS); and

WHEREAS, the State has not yet issued POBs due in part to the available investment climate, but recently the market has been very favorable for issuance of these bonds; and

WHEREAS, the State is contemplating issuing about \$960 million in POBs for TRS and \$1 billion or so for PERS (the amount will be tied to the current projected payments of on-behalf funds). The objective of the issue of POBs is to smooth the State's payments of on-behalf pension liability over time, and to gain from the approximately 4.5% gap between bond costs and the plan-applied investment return rate charged; and

WHEREAS, the POB proceeds are projected to make the TRS program 90% funded and to substantially increase the funding ration of the PERS program; and

WHEREAS, increases in the PERS and TRS funding rations reduce the risk of increased actuarially required rates to fund the retirement systems and reduce the pressure to shift expenses to municipal employers through increases in employer contribution rates; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League opposes any increase in employer contribution rates to PERS and TRS; and

WHEREAS, the Governor is not proposing changing the 22% and 12.56% limits on employer contribution rates as a result of the issuance of POBs; and

WHEREAS, while there is discussion among some legislators about increasing employer contribution rates, there is no legislation currently pending to change employer contribution rates; and

1 **WHEREAS**, the financial incentive for the Legislature to increase employer contribution
 2 rates as a method of reducing State expenditures is decreased through the use of POBs
 3 because POBs are funded separately by bond payments which, while subject to
 4 appropriation, must be paid to maintain a favorable State bond rating, and employer
 5 contributions will not be a funding source for bond payments.

6
 7 **NOW, THEREFOR BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the
 8 potential for Pension Obligation Bonds (POBs) to provide savings to the State, supports
 9 the use of POBs to provide a budget savings and bring more stability to payments of the
 10 unfunded liability and strongly opposes any increase in the employer contribution limits
 11 or reduction in the State’s responsibility to make on behalf payments as a result of
 12 issuance of POBs.

13
 14 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
 15 November, 2016.

16
 17
 18
 19 Signed: _____
 20 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

21
 22
 23
 24 Attest: _____
 25 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: Ketchikan Gateway Borough	Date Submitted: 09/16
Contact Name: Scott Brandt-Erichsen	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	

34



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-08

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING PROVISIONS FOR ENHANCED LOCAL CONTROL
IN THE ISSUANCE OF ALCOHOL BEVERAGE LICENSES AND PERMITS WITHIN
FIRST CLASS AND HOME RULE MUNICIPALITIES**

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League position statement on Local Control is that "... it is imperative that, unless prohibited by law, municipalities closest to the electorate be able to provide their constituents with the laws, services, benefits, and taxation that the local populations, through their local elected officials, feel is appropriate."; and

WHEREAS, Article X of the Alaska State Constitution references the intent of "maximum local self-government"; and

WHEREAS, the issuance of alcohol beverage licenses and permits within organized municipalities in the state is regulated by Title 4 of the Alaska State Statutes; and

WHEREAS, under Alaska Statutes Title 4, local municipalities are provided the opportunity to object to the issuance or renewal of alcoholic beverage licenses and permits within their jurisdiction, but otherwise have no authority in the issuance, number or type of licenses or permits; and

WHEREAS, the recently implemented marijuana regulations provide for "maximum local self-government" by giving local municipalities the authority to determine whether to allow marijuana establishments within its border, and if allowed, the number and types of establishments to be permitted; and

WHEREAS, the same level of local control is not afforded to municipalities when it comes to regulating alcoholic beverage licenses and permits under Alaska Statutes Title 4; and

WHEREAS, local control is the preferred method of regulating, controlling and managing socially affected economic issues; and

WHEREAS, first class and home rule municipalities which have effective law enforcement, land use controls, and health facilities are well-suited to determine the number and types of alcoholic beverage industries within their borders, and the affects and impacts thereof; and

WHEREAS, providing a mechanism for first class and home rule municipalities to participate in determining the appropriate number and types of alcoholic beverage

1 licenses and permits within their community, will provide for more effective regulation of
2 licenses and permits across our vast and diverse state; and

3
4
5 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League supports
6 amendments to Title 4 of the Alaska State Statutes which would provide for maximum
7 local self-government to include establishing a mechanism for first class and home rule
8 municipalities to participate in determining the appropriate number and types of alcoholic
9 beverage licenses and permits in their communities, especially in those municipalities
10 with local law enforcement, land use controls and sufficient health and human services
11 resources.

12
13 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on the 18th day of
14 November, 2016.

15
16 Signed: _____
17 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

18
19
20 Attest: _____
21 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

24 Submitted by: City of Soldotna	Date Submitted: 09/16
25 Contact Name: Mark Dixson	Contact Phone#:
27 Implementation Recommendation	
29 Agencies to Contact:	
31 Funding Required:	
33 Staff/Board/Membership Action:	
35	
36	
37	
38	
39	

40
41 This resolution was approved for submission to the Alaska Municipal League membership
42 by the Soldotna City Council on September 28, 2016.



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-09

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE SUPPORTING AN AMENDMENT TO ALASKA STATUTE TO CHANGE THE FIRE SPRINKLER EXEMPTION FROM A MANDATORY EXEMPTION TO AN OPTIONAL EXEMPTION

WHEREAS, Alaska Statute 29.45.030(l) requires municipalities to provide a property tax exemption of 2% of the assessed value of a structure that has a fire protection system installed, such as sprinklers; and

WHEREAS, the value of this property tax exemption in 2015 was \$815,637; and

WHEREAS, building codes in many of the larger municipalities require fire sprinkler systems in many buildings; and

WHEREAS, relocating the fire sprinkler exemption from AS 29.45.030 - Required Exemptions to AS 29.45.050 – Optional Exemptions and Exclusions, allows other municipalities without fire sprinkler requirements in code to offer the exemption as an incentive for safe building practices; and

WHEREAS, elimination of the mandatory fire sprinkler tax exemption was suggested by the Municipality of Anchorage Budget Advisory Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports changing the fire sprinkler statute from a mandatory exemption to an optional exemption.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of November, 2016.

Signed: _____
Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

1
2
3
4

Submitted by: Municipality of Anchorage	Date Submitted: 09/16
Contact Name: Rose Foley	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-10

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE SUPPORTING INCLUSION
OF THE PORT OF ANCHORAGE ON A STATEWIDE GENERAL OBLIGATION
BOND IN 2018**

WHEREAS, the Port of Anchorage (Port) is Alaska’s premier cargo import terminal, handling approximately four million tons of food, building materials, cars, clothing, cement, fuel and other commodities every year, that Alaskans need to live, work and thrive in our state; and

WHEREAS, the Port is the transport hub that efficiently moves fuel and goods to some 200 communities throughout Alaska, military bases and other destinations across the state; and

WHEREAS, the Port is an economic driver in Alaska, where almost half of the cargo crossing its docks is bound for destinations outside of Anchorage, from Homer to Prudhoe Bay, and is a critical piece of national defense infrastructure that helps keep the United States strong; and

WHEREAS, the port originally opened shortly after statehood in 1961 and is now suffering from corrosion and age and is unlikely to survive another significant earthquake; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage spends as much as \$5 million annually to maintain operational capacity of existing structures, but this does little to enhance the facility’s operational efficiency and nothing to assure earthquake survivability; and

WHEREAS, a Port modernization project will update facilities to improve operational safety and efficiency and accommodate modern shipping operations, as well as improve resiliency to enable facilities to survive earthquakes and Cook Inlet’s harsh marine environment for at least 75 years; and

WHEREAS, there is no practical or affordable alternative to modernizing the Port because the infrastructure cannot be economically duplicated elsewhere due to the current infrastructure’s preponderance of private sector investment value, intermodal transportation system connections, proximity of Alaska population centers; and tsunami protection from upper Cook Inlet geography; and

WHEREAS, the Port modernization project is expected to cost \$550 million. The Municipality of Anchorage is asking State officials to include funding for the Port in a

1 statewide obligation bond referendum on the November 2018 ballot to replace the main
2 cargo terminals; and

3
4 **WHEREAS**, the alternative to State funding would be paid for by shippers through
5 increased cargo tariffs that will be ultimately passed on to State residents through added
6 cost to every gallon of milk, tank of gasoline and every other commodity shipped through
7 the Port.

8
9 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League supports
10 inclusion of the Anchorage Port modernization project on a statewide general obligation
11 bond referendum on the November 2018 ballot.

12
13 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on the 18th day of
14 November, 2016.

15
16
17
18 Signed: _____
19 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

20
21
22
23 Attest: _____
24 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: Municipality of Anchorage	Date Submitted: 09/16
Contact Name: Rose Foley	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	

30
31
32
33



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-11

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FULL FUNDING FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA
MUNICIPAL HARBOR FACILITY GRANT PROGRAM IN THE FY 2018 STATE
CAPITAL BUDGET.**

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the majority of the public boat harbors in Alaska where constructed by the State during the 1960s and 1970s; and

WHEREAS, these harbor facilities represent critical transportation links and are the transportation hubs for waterfront commerce and economic development in Alaskan coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, these harbor facilities are ports of refuge and areas for protection for ocean-going vessels and fishermen throughout the State of Alaska, especially in coastal Alaskan communities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska over the past nearly 30 years has transferred ownership of most of these State owned harbors, many of which were at or near the end of their service life at the time of transfer, to local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities took over this important responsibility even though they knew that these same harbor facilities were in poor condition at the time of transfer due to the state's failure to keep up with deferred maintenance; and

WHEREAS, consequently, when local municipal harbormasters formulated their annual harbor facility budgets, they inherited a major financial burden that their local municipal governments could not afford; and

WHEREAS, in response to this financial burden, the Governor and the Alaska Legislature passed legislation in 2006, supported by the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators, to create the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant program, AS 29.60.800; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League is pleased with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities administrative process to review, score and rank applicants to the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program, since state funds may be limited; and

1 **WHEREAS**, for each harbor facility grant application, these municipalities have
2 committed to invest 100% of the design and permitting costs and 50% of the
3 construction cost; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, the municipalities of the City of Kake, the City of Ketchikan, the City and
6 Borough of Sitka, the Municipality of Skagway, the City of Valdez, and the City and
7 Borough of Wrangell have offered to contribute \$18,160,055 in local match funding for
8 FY18 towards seven harbor projects of significant importance locally as required in the
9 Harbor Facility Grant Program; and
10

11 **WHEREAS**, completion of these harbor facility projects is all dependent on the 50%
12 match from the State of Alaska's Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program; and
13

14 **WHEREAS**, during the last ten years the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program has
15 only been fully funded twice; and
16

17 **WHEREAS**, during the last ten years the backlog of projects necessary to repair and
18 replace these former State owned harbors has increased to over \$100,000,000.
19

20 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Alaska Municipal League urges full
21 funding in the amount of \$18,160,055 by the Governor and the Alaska Legislature for
22 the State of Alaska's Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program in the FY18 State Capital
23 Budget in order to ensure enhanced safety and economic prosperity among Alaskan
24 coastal communities.
25

26 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
27 November, 2016.
28
29
30

31 Signed: _____
32 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League
33
34
35

36 Attest: _____
37 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

1
2
3
4
5

Submitted by: Alaska Association of Harbormasters & Port Administrators

Date Submitted: 09/16

Contact Name: Carl Uchytel

Contact Phone #:

Implementation Recommendation:

Agencies to Contact:

Funding Required:

Staff/Board/Membership Action:



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-12

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE IN SUPPORT OF THE
ADDITION OF PORT AND HARBOR EMPLOYEES TO THE LIST OF EMPLOYEES
COVERED BY AS 12.55.135.**

WHEREAS, State of Alaska statute AS 12.55.135 Sentences of Imprisonment for Misdemeanors establishes minimum terms of imprisonment for defendants convicted of assaulting or harassing uniformed or otherwise clearly identified peace officers, fire fighters, correctional employees, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, ambulance attendants or other emergency responders or medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, port and harbor employees in communities throughout the State of Alaska routinely perform enforcement and emergency response duties commensurate with those performed by peace officers, fire fighters, correctional employees, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, ambulance attendants or other emergency responders or medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, defendants convicted of assaulting or harassing port and harbor employees in several recent cases have received sentences well below the minimums established in AS 12.55.135 for defendants convicted of assaulting or harassing uniformed or otherwise clearly identified peace officers, fire fighters, correctional employees, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, ambulance attendants or other emergency responders or medical professionals; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League desires to strengthen the deterrent to unlawfully assault or harass port and harbor employees throughout the State of Alaska.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the addition of port and harbor employees to the list of employees covered by State of Alaska statute AS 12.55.135 Sentences of Imprisonment for Misdemeanors, which establishes minimum terms of imprisonment for defendants convicted of assaulting or harassing uniformed or otherwise clearly identified peace officers, fire fighters, correctional employees, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, ambulance attendants or other emergency responders or medical professionals.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of November, 2016

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

Signed: _____
Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Submitted by: Alaska Association of Harbor Masters & Port Administrators	
Contact Name: Carl Uchytel	Date Submitted: 09/16
Implementation Recommendation:	Contact Phone #:
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION# 2017-13

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE IN SUPPORT OF
PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALASKA STATUTES CHAPTER 30.30 AND 05.25
IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION OF DERELICT VESSELS.**

WHEREAS, hundreds of derelict vessels currently litter Alaska’s coastline and harbors and these numbers will increase every year unless action is taken to address aging fleets and changing commercial fisheries; and

WHEREAS, in the past year alone there have been numerous derelict vessel situations that have cost the state, municipalities, and the federal government considerable expense, including two ex-Navy tugs in Adak, abandoned barges in Steamboat Slough near Bethel, and the tug Challenger that sunk off Juneau; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the widespread costs and the environmental and navigational risks for both municipalities and the state associated with derelict vessels; and

WHEREAS, neighboring states have dramatically strengthened their derelict vessel prevention laws in the past five years to better prevent, track and manage derelict vessels, including raising fees to support state management of derelict vessels and requiring vessel insurance; and

WHEREAS, in 1990 the Alaska legislature passed a resolution acknowledging the need to better understand and address the existing and growing problem of derelict vessels around the state; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has outdated statutes regarding derelict vessels which lack the ability to track vessel owners, agency enforcement authority, statewide coordination of response, funding or vessel insurance requirements; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the Alaska Clean Harbors program convened an ad-hoc derelict vessel task force at the urging of the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators which includes representatives from state and federal agencies as well as the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators, regional tribal representatives, federal and state legislative offices, and private industry; and

1 **WHEREAS**, over nine full-day meetings, the task force developed thoughtful, robust
2 and meaningful proposed changes that will help all stakeholders around the state,
3 including harbor facilities, better address and prevent derelict vessels; and
4

5 **WHEREAS**, these changes will protect municipal harbor infrastructure, keep valuable
6 moorage space in harbors available, and will prevent unsustainable economic,
7 environmental and navigational hazards; and
8

9 **WHEREAS**, the proposed changes will improve communication and coordination
10 between Alaska’s harbors and state and federal agencies, directly leading to decreased
11 costs associated with managing derelict vessels.
12

13 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Municipal League fully supports
14 the passage by the state legislature of all proposed revisions in Alaska Statutes 30.30
15 and 05.25.
16

17 **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of
18 November, 2016.
19
20
21
22

23 Signed: _____
24 Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League
25
26
27

28 Attest: _____
29 Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League
30
31
32
33

1
2
3
4
5
6

Submitted by: Alaska Association of Harbor Masters & Port Administrators	
Contact Name: Carl Uchytel	Date Submitted: 09/16
	Contact Phone #:
Implementation Recommendation:	
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-14

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE STATE OF ALASKA ADOPTING 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.”

WHEREAS, the 2017 Edition of the National Electrical Code, Article 555.3 requires 30mA ground fault protection at the overcurrent devices feeding a marina, boatyard, commercial and noncommercial docking facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League acknowledges the real world reality that many boats may have small amounts of ground current that are well below the trip level of 30mA (0.030 amps) , however, when added together at the main circuit breaker may exceed the 30mA code requirement and thus shut down the entire harbor electrical system; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes that it is necessary to detect electrical ground current at its source and therefore to disconnect power at the source of the problem instead of disconnecting power to the entire harbor and in doing so creating other safety and operation problems.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League fully supports the passage by the state legislature of the adoption of the following find 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.”.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of November, 2016.

Signed: _____
Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: _____
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11

Submitted by: Alaska Association of Harbor Masters & Port Administrators	
Contact Name: Carl Uchytel	Date Submitted: 09/16
Implementation Recommendation:	Contact Phone #:
Agencies to Contact:	
Funding Required:	
Staff/Board/Membership Action:	



Position Committee Guidelines

The AML Position Statement was developed by an AML standing committee composed of the AML President and appointed or elected officials from member municipalities who have expertise in one or more of the following subject areas:

- Economic Development
- Education
- Energy
- Finance/Taxation
- Public Safety
- Resource Management
- Transportation

Other committee members include:

- One At-Large member
- AML Executive Director
- Sitting board President

In order to assure that the position statements remain true to the goal of reflecting the will of our members and the League's philosophy and mission, changes to the position statements will be considered by both the committee and the membership only if endorsed by resolution of a member's governing body.

Changes begin during the AML Summer Conference in August. A copy of the current AML Position Statement was sent to all member municipalities for review. Changes considered during the AML Summer Conference are included in the DRAFT 2017 Position Statement.

The DRAFT 2017 Position Statement is sent to all member municipalities prior to the AML Annual Business meeting in November. For changes to be considered, resolutions supporting the change must be received in the AML office electronically, by mail or fax, no later than October 7, 2016. Resolutions for changes to this document will not be accepted after this date.

The Position Committee shall debate and act upon each resolution for final recommendations to the membership during the Position Committee meeting on November 16, 2016. If the Position Committee does not accept the submitted resolution, the governing body may bring it to the floor at the Luncheon General Session on November 17, 2016 for discussion.

Those resolutions accepted by the Position Committee shall also be discussed during the Luncheon General Session on November 17, 2016 for incorporation into the Position Statement. The amended Position Statement shall be voted on by the full membership at the AML Business Meeting to be held on the morning of November 18, 2016.

Note: These resolutions are "separate" from the Action Resolutions that AML adopts to further a specific "issue" during the Legislative or Congressional session.



DRAFT 2017 Position Statements

**One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200
Juneau, Alaska 99801**

**(907) 586-1325
Fax (907) 463-5480**

www.akml.org

**Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director
kathie@akml.org**

Alaska Municipal League

Position Statements:

Local Control.....	Page 1
Revenue Sharing.....	Page 2
PERS/TRS Unfunded Liability.....	Page 3
Fiscal Policy.....	Page 4
Education.....	Page 5
Energy.....	Page 6
Transportation.....	Page 7
Fishing.....	Page 8
Public Safety.....	Page 9
Economic Development.....	Page 10
Minerals.....	Page 11
Clean Water.....	Page 12



One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200 ♦ Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel (907) 586-1325 ♦ Fax (907) 463-5480 ♦ www.akml.org

Local Control

Article X of the Alaska State Constitution makes mention, throughout, of “maximum local self-government...” The Alaska Supreme Court has used this section to make close calls in favor of municipalities in many court proceedings. While Title 29 lays out the laws under which a municipal government must operate, liberal construction is given to municipalities under the State Constitution.

Due to the large geographical land mass of Alaska; due to the different cultures that are in place in the many large areas of Alaska; due to the differing array of climates and environment experienced by each area of Alaska; and due to the differing infrastructure, facilities and services provided within each area, it is common knowledge that most “one size fits all” legislation that might attempt to envelop the entire State does not usually work well in Alaska. Therefore, it is imperative that, unless prohibited by law, municipalities closest to the electorate be able to provide their constituents with the laws, services, benefits, and taxation that the local populations, through their local elected officials, feel is appropriate.

The Alaska Municipal League has always based their positions upon two guiding principles: Does it allow for maximum local control, and/or does it create an unfunded mandate.



One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 200 ♦ Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel (907) 586-1325 ♦ Fax (907) 463-5480 ♦ www.akml.org

Revenue Sharing

The State's Constitution entrusts state government with managing the state's resources to the maximum benefit of all Alaskans. The Constitution also promotes maximum self-governance at the local level. It is therefore incumbent upon the Governor and Legislature to manage and distribute the wealth of Alaska's resources to local governments each and every year. Predictable, dependable, and direct Revenue Sharing is therefore required for the State to meet its Constitutional obligations. To that end, the State should designate a specific long-term funding source that would perpetually sustain the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program.



PERS/TRS Unfunded Liability

Management of Alaska's public retirement system has always been the responsibility of State government. Participating municipalities have had no choice but to rely on information provided by the State when making decisions regarding their own contributions to the system. Decades of improper accounting and inaccurate actuarial data provided by the State to municipalities, has now created a huge unfunded pension liability that can no longer be accurately apportioned among all participating employers. The League recognizes that there is municipal responsibility to participate in solving this fiscal problem. However, as the primary responsible party and the only entity with the long-term resources to effectively deal with the magnitude of the issue, the State should incorporate into its long-term fiscal planning strategy a leading position that ensures this ongoing obligation is met, while maintaining close coordination with participating employers to avoid the potential of shifting too great a burden to local governments.

The Alaska Municipal League strongly supports reforms that would allow flexibility with regards to the management of the local government workforce (i.e., termination study costs, below-the-floor penalties).



Fiscal Policy

It is critical for the State to establish long-term financial policy as opposed to short-term reactive approaches that primarily focus on annual revenue/expenditure fluctuations or fiscal austerity. Accumulation of reserves during good years should continue as part of that policy, however draws from reserves during lean years should be more process driven and not as subject to political bartering.

When necessary, State budget cuts in one department's program area must be coordinated with complimentary programs in other departments. The same needs to occur between State and local municipal programs. To do otherwise will sacrifice critical service delivery and the health of the economy statewide. The League calls upon the Governor to provide Cabinet level leadership during budget formulation to balance these interrelated effects. At the legislative level the League asks that the Director of Management and Budget works closely with the Director of the Legislative Finance Division to assure that programs remain balanced during the Legislature's budget deliberations.

The Legislature must also ensure that State initiatives always include the necessary State resources required for implementation. Unfunded mandates to local governments are tantamount to unilaterally usurping critical local income and priorities.

State funding reductions to municipalities, when necessary, should occur over a number of years to provide those municipalities with the reaction time to make adjustments. New revenue sources, if considered, must always consider impacts to existing local government revenue sources first. Local municipal sources already in place must always take primacy over new State revenue schemes.



Education

Funding of Public School Districts: The Alaska Constitution provides that the State shall “establish and maintain a system of public schools.” The State established school districts to be the basic unit for the administration of schools. The funding of these school districts is complex and segmented with Federal, State, and local sources. Additionally, State and Federal categorical funds are available to meet special circumstances, which adds to the complexity.

- Sudden alterations in funding and dramatic shifts in funding levels cause havoc as the districts try to implement programs. Thus, stability of funding is required for the adequate management of school districts. Funding levels will change; but *predictable, phased* increases (or reductions if necessary) are essential.
- Additionally, billions of State and local dollars have been expended on educational infrastructure, sudden reductions in funding inevitably cause the deferral in maintenance of this massive investment. Such deferral of maintenance increases the eventual price tag when minor maintenance issues become critical failures.

Local Control: One of the League’s guiding principles is local control. AML recognizes that ultimate control of education rests with the State Legislature by constitutional dictate; but also recognizes that every educational mandate by the Legislature can impact other important locally developed programs. Every School District is unique with widely different populations, cultures, lifestyles, educational backgrounds, and expectations. AML therefore challenges the Legislature to maximize local control over education and to provide flexibility for local circumstance wherever possible.

Evaluation of School Performance: Evaluation of schools is a process of assessing and reporting a set of key indicators, such as student standardized test results, proficiency rates, graduation rates, drop-out rates, etc. This evaluation process should provide the community with the data on how well the students and district are performing, and to provide the school district with the benchmarks for programmatic improvement. The goal is to continuously improve local educational programs. Almost every new Administration brings a new performance or accountability program, with a different twist, tool, or plan requiring school district action or adaptation. Each alteration has the potential of interfering with the longitudinal evaluation data stream. Thus it is essential that each change be tailored to avoid that disruption. In Alaska, the evaluation process needs to be local, positive, and focused on continually enhancing the local educational performance.

Education Programs for Workforce Development: The primary task for Alaska’s University System and the vocational technical centers in Alaska is to prepare Alaskans with the skills needed by Alaskan industries and employers. There are, of course, other tasks performed by these educational institutions, but preparing the populace to meet the economic and workforce needs in Alaska needs to be kept as the principal priority.



Energy

Energy Policy. Alaska's economy depends heavily on increasingly expensive gasoline and diesel fuel for heating, transportation, and electric power. Energy costs in rural areas are generally significantly higher, but vary widely depending on transportation costs, seasonal usage peaks, nearby petroleum development infrastructure, and many other factors. Wind and hydroelectric power are abundant and underdeveloped. Processing and distribution facilities to use some of the oil and gas produced in Alaska are virtually non-existent. There are extensive gas reserves, but no current way to get it to the lower 48 or other markets. Production, transportation, storage, and distribution systems to take advantage of these resources in Alaska must be developed immediately.

Alaska's current oil and gas energy policy is complicated and to some extent, driven by the industry and national political decisions which are outside Alaskan's control. Support, other than financial, should be provided to encourage new exploration and development of oil and gas resources. Alaska policy needs to emphasize the production, distribution, use and sale of our oil and gas resources to benefit all Alaskans.

Alaska's energy policy therefore requires a thorough review with emphasis on the needs of Alaska residents. Permitting and future development of energy resources need to emphasize "Alaska First." Processing facilities and distribution for Alaskans must be a very high priority. Other opportunities, although expensive, abound for the use of alternative energy from the sun, water, wind, and tidal surges. The technology to build and operate facilities utilizing some of Alaska's natural resources to provide biomass for heat and fuel also needs more emphasis. Revenues from a new natural gas pipeline must be made available for local communities and rural residents to draw upon for energy related grants or for low interest rate loans to help diversify sources and reduce energy costs.

Energy Planning. Alaska is one of the most energy rich states in the union, yet the cost of energy throughout the State is far above the national average. Most local governments have identified the cost of energy as a primary detrimental influence affecting quality of life and economic expansion within their communities.

As the State moves forward with plans to develop a North Slope LNG pipeline to tidewater, it is critical that strategic planning be started immediately at the State level to identify local energy needs statewide, and to develop a comprehensive plan to use either the natural gas itself, or the revenue from the sale of natural gas, to mitigate the high cost of energy throughout the State. This planning must occur in time to influence the design of any LNG pipeline and/or associated processing/shipping facilities, as to maximize the ability of those facilities to meet the strategic energy needs of the State.



Transportation

Transportation infrastructure in Alaska includes much more than roads. When we say transportation we mean surface, air, trail, rail and water. All of these modes work together to move people, goods and services throughout our great state.

Transportation investment has been studied and proven to be a critical economic driver over and over again. Alaska's transportation infrastructure is pivotal to the state's economy and facilitates access to markets, supplies, and most of all, resources. Improving and investing in Alaska's transportation system will enhance the global competitiveness of Alaska business and economic opportunities for its people. Alaska needs new transportation infrastructure development to provide access to resources, reduce barriers for communities to participate in the economy, allow for safe and efficient transportation for all Alaskans, and to dramatically improve Alaskan's quality of life statewide. It is equally important to ensure the maintenance of our existing infrastructure.

Historically, the federal government has been funding 85%-90% of Alaska's transportation infrastructure budget. The Federal Highway Trust Fund is experiencing significant shortfalls, contributing to a decrease in federal funds for Alaska, which is not likely to rebound. The League therefore supports a State Transportation Fund with predictable funding that will provide continuity between Administrations and be applicable to all our modes of transportation.



Fishing

Alaska has over 34,000 miles of coastline on three different seas: Arctic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, and the Bering Sea. Over half of the nation's commercially harvested fish, crab and shrimp come from Alaska, nearly four times more than the next largest seafood producing state. A rich variety of other species, such as sea cucumbers, abalone, sea urchins, herring, etc. also come from Alaskan waters and provides unique export markets. More than eight of Alaska's ports consistently rate in the top 30 U.S. ports in terms of volume or value of seafood delivered. Seafood has been and remains one of Alaska's top export commodities.

The vast fishery resources of Alaska are of significant importance to the economies of the state and the nation. Local benefits from these resources are not uniformly spread throughout Alaska, but heavily concentrated in communities along the coast of Alaska. The economies of many Alaskan coastal communities are largely dependent on the fishing industry.

Throughout most of the state, there is also a subsistence and recreational need and lifestyle associated with fish resources. These are critically important sectors of our culture and economy that must also be considered in any resource management plan for the industry.

Revenues to local communities from fishing vary considerably and are dependent on a number of factors including the overall health and strength of various fisheries, quota allocations, changing management schemes, as well as the location of processors and the public and private docks or ports to which the catches are delivered. As state funding declines many of the coastal communities face major challenges to maintain community services provided, in part, to the large seasonal influx of fisherman. It will therefore be almost impossible to maintain these current ports and harbor facilities without some other sources of revenue, including consideration of recreational demand on these facilities. As the fishing industry adjusts to change, the state needs to review its current laws and regulations regarding the collection and distribution of revenues from fishery resources and ensure they are equitably allocated to Alaska's fishing communities.



Public Safety

The State provides needed public safety services to areas not covered by local law enforcement agencies (per AS 44.41.020) and assistance to municipal police departments with the enforcement of criminal laws (AS 18.65.090). It is also critical for the State to maintain all necessary training for Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs) as they provide essential public safety services to communities that otherwise would not have law enforcement.

Municipalities often depend on the State, which has the responsibility for search and rescue operations (AS 18.60.120), to conduct search and rescues within their municipalities.

The State provides a criminal justice information system that is utilized by State and local law enforcement agencies (AS 44.41.020(b)) and is vital to municipal law enforcement, as it provides information unavailable through any other sources. Further, the State Crime Lab provides basic forensic services to law enforcement agencies free of charge. State and local law enforcement rely on these services for aiding in the investigation and prosecution of crimes and in solving other non-criminal cases.

The State has implemented and maintains an interoperable communication system that is used by an increasing number of public safety personnel in the state. This system allows for an increased range of operation and the ability to communicate with other local and state agencies. As long as the cost of these systems continues to be borne by the State, municipalities will continue to find them to be very useful tools.

The State operates the Public Safety Academy which trains many law enforcement officers and provides consistency with public safety services statewide. The training for municipal police officers at the academy is generally funded, upon request through the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC). APSC is also responsible for setting the standards for police officers and for certifying police officers.

Some municipalities operate contract holding facilities for in-custody persons. These municipalities rely on funding from the State to operate these facilities. In lieu of this, the Department of Corrections or law enforcement would be required to transport prisoners at an increase in both time and state expense.

Emergency Medical Technician certifications and Paramedic licensing (required by AS 18.08.84 and 12 AAC 40.300-390 respectively) represent essential life safety functions of the state that must be continued. The required Division of Forestry training for response to wild land fires is also critically important to ensure the protection of all state lands and threatened nearby infrastructure. Funding for this program should be maintained.



Economic Development

Economic development permeates all AML position statements. Effective communication between the Governor, the Legislature, and local governments is critical to the success of any strategic long range state or local economic development strategy.

Even though government cannot affect all the factors important to economic development, it can have a significant impact through both its traditional role as a public service provider and regulator, and its entrepreneurial role as a dealmaker and business recruiter. Of these two roles, the former is essential – government must provide quality basic services and an efficient regulatory environment if it wishes to create economic development. Providing further incentives to businesses are optional; whether it makes sense depends on what government can reasonably offer, the extent to which such offerings are necessary to attract or retain firms, and that the cost of such offerings can be fully funded by the State be entirely a local option.

Public policy can affect factors that are important to businesses, primarily through regulations, taxes, and incentives. It is therefore incumbent upon the Governor and Legislature to maintain a long-term commitment to Alaska's future by considering local stability and growth, as well as local community plans to develop and implement a comprehensive State vision for economic growth and diversification. Such a vision then needs to guide all future State policy and budgetary decisions.



Minerals

Alaska's size and complex geology provide immense opportunity for a wide variety of minerals to occur, including coal, gold, copper, silver, molybdenum, zinc, and rare earth minerals. Before statehood, the mineral industry made up about 30% of the economy as compared to about 5% today. Vast untapped mineral reserves still exist.

Some of the disadvantages in Alaska are the distances from markets, lack of road systems to move the material, and in some cases, the lack of technology to develop and process the mineral. All these factors raise the cost of production and make it harder for the industry to compete with other parts of the U.S. and the world.

Alaska enjoys a unique position in that there are vast untapped minerals for the future. These minerals are available to be developed when needed. Such development should occur while incorporating the best environmental practices to protect the environment. Bonds need to be required to protect the resources and people in case of default.

AML supports and encourages research efforts, whether public or private, into new and improved methods to overcome Alaska's disadvantages, to negate potential adverse impacts, and to improve mineral recovery. Special emphasis should be aimed at improving discharge quality from mine operations and to reduce the risk of dam failures.

The Governor and Legislature need to be active advocates in the responsible development of our mineral resources.



Clean Water

Alaska's abundance of rivers, lakes, wetlands, snowfields, and glaciers comprise an estimated 40% of the Nation's surface water. There are more than 12,000 rivers in Alaska, and three of those rivers, the Yukon, the Kuskokwim, and the Copper, are among the ten largest rivers in the United States. Alaska has more than 3 million lakes ranging from pond size to 1,000 square miles. Despite Alaska's wealth of water, its water resources are not uniformly distributed geographically or seasonally.

Water is highly important to Alaskans, not only for domestic use, but also for the fishing and tourism industries. Alaska needs to assure that policies are in place to protect the quality of its waters, while not inhibiting responsible development, and that those policies are reviewed and updated periodically to assure they include the most up to date and proven science, and are applicable to the unique characteristics of our state.

Alaska also needs to take an active role in the trans-boundary protection of rivers and streams. Treaties with Canada on the protection of rivers need to be reviewed to assure they include new technologies and practices.

All types of development need to account for the costs of putting the best mitigation practices in effect.

