



Alaska Municipal League
2010 Policy Statement

Working Draft

1 **PART I**

2 **REVENUE AND FINANCE**

3
4 **The goal is for municipalities to partner with the state to provide needed public**
5 **services to Alaskans while maintaining the lowest possible cost to the public,**
6 **municipalities, and the state, recognizing that all states provide financial support**
7 **to their political subdivisions to reduce local taxes and equitably share state**
8 **resources**

9
10 **A. REVENUE SHARING, FUNDING FOR EDUCATION, GRANTS, & FISCAL**
11 **PLANNING.**

12
13 **1. State Revenue Sharing**

- 14 **a. Sustainable Revenue Sharing:** The State of Alaska is urged to adopt a sustainable
15 revenue sharing program by annually appropriating 6% of natural resource revenues,
16 with no cap, to municipalities; with a base amount of \$250,000 to all boroughs, \$75,000
17 to all cities, and \$25,000 to unincorporated communities, with the remainder to be
18 allocated on a per capita basis. The sharing of state revenues is consistent with the
19 Owner State concept, intergovernmental cooperation, and constitutional provisions,
20 which provide for natural resource ownership by all the people of the State of Alaska.
21 Delivery of services at the local level is part of the annual state responsibility to

1 citizen/owners for the betterment of the State of Alaska. Fish tax, which has a revenue
2 sharing program, is excluded from this program. The League opposes linking
3 community revenue sharing with PERS/TRS and education funding.

4 **b. Return of Locally-Generated State Revenues:** State shared revenues should be tied to
5 specific locally generated revenues. Money to be returned to local governments and
6 taxpayers should be based on:

- 7 • Tobacco Tax: Tobacco tax settlement revenues should be shared with local taxpayers
8 for health and social services impacted by tobacco use.
- 9 • Alcohol Tax: The wholesale tax on alcohol should be shared equitably with
10 municipalities for programs that mitigate the impacts of alcohol consumption based
11 on a proportion of the local vs. state expenditures for public safety and alcohol
12 treatment.
- 13 • Marine Fuel Taxes: Eighty percent (80%) of all the taxes from the sale of marine fuel
14 used in watercraft shall be allocated to municipalities that have responsibility and/or
15 ownership for marine ports/harbors for use in marine port harbor facilities
16 maintenance and improvements.
- 17 • Motor Vehicle Registration Fee and Fuel Tax: Fuel tax and vehicle registration fees
18 should be used to fund state and municipal highway road operation, maintenance,
19 and improvements. The motor vehicle fuel tax and vehicle registration fees should be
20 shared on an equitable basis between local and state government based on the
21 proportion of local vs. state maintained center-line road miles. The League also

1 supports an increase in fuel tax and vehicle registration fees, provided they are used
2 for the benefit of road maintenance, for public transportation, and/or for the
3 elimination of the 10% local match for federal highway funds.

- 4 • **State Fisheries Business and Fisheries Landing Taxes:** The state needs to strengthen its
5 enforcement and collection efforts in this program and further recommends the state
6 share collection information with municipalities upon request.

7 **c. State PILT:** State lands and facilities consume local government services but AS
8 29.45.030 exempts them from local property and sales taxes that are applicable to all
9 other citizens and businesses. A state PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) similar to the
10 federal PILT program should be established to reduce local taxpayer subsidization of
11 state lands, state parks, and facilities. Based on the above criteria, local taxpayers are
12 currently subsidizing state government by approximately \$75 million per year. These
13 subsidies should be funded with a PILT.

14 **2. State Funding for Education**

15 **Full Funding for Education:** The League supports continued long-term full funding of the
16 education foundation program, school debt reimbursement, and construction and opposes
17 any change in the State's Foundation Formula that would increase the burden to local
18 governments. (See Part II, Education for a full discussion of AML's position.)
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1 **3. Municipal Capital Matching Grants**

2 **a. Full Funding for the Municipal Capital Matching Grant Program:** The League
3 supports full funding for the Municipal Capital Matching Grant Program for local
4 capital infrastructure needs at not less than the historical funding level of \$20 million
5 level per year, adjusted for inflation since inception of the program in 1993. (See also
6 A.1. in Public Works and Infrastructure section). The purpose of the Municipal Capital
7 Matching Grant Program was to allow communities to meet their top infrastructure
8 needs most efficiently while shielding them from the political legislative allocation
9 process.

10 **b. State and Municipal Facilities and Infrastructure:** Funding for the maintenance of state
11 and municipal facilities and infrastructure should be provided on a timely and
12 consistent basis.

13 **c. Deferred Maintenance:** The existing program to provide ongoing funding for deferred
14 maintenance for state and municipal public facilities and infrastructure should be
15 expanded using revenue sources other than local taxation for state mandated facilities.

16 **d. Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement Number 34:** State
17 support should be at a level at which municipalities can implement a deferred
18 maintenance program and establish necessary reserves sufficient for future
19 maintenance in order to comply with GASB 34.
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B. ADMINISTRATION OF MUNICIPAL GRANTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

1. Regulation of Grants & Entitlements

- a. **Standardized Grant and Entitlement Programs:** The League supports simple and standardized grant and entitlement programs. The League opposes the addition of special conditions or regulations to grants and entitlement programs by state departments administering the grants when such conditions are not contained in the appropriation or the authorizing legislation. Further, legislatively authorized grant award time frames should not be reduced due to administrative grant management policies.
- b. **Reduction of Administrative Fees:** The League further supports the reduction of all administrative fees deducted by state departments administering the grants programs, and supports direct expenditures for those services.
- c. **Interest Earned on Grant Funds:** The League supports the grantees’ retention or use of interest earned on grant funds.

2. Maintaining the Integrity of Objective Project and Program Ranking Processes

The League supports maintaining the integrity of objective state grant ranking processes, developed in cooperation with the Legislature, municipalities and school districts. Such

1 objective ranking processes include Capital Project Matching Grants, School Construction
2 Grants, and Water and Sewer Construction Grants. Rather than substitute projects at the
3 legislative level, the League supports revision of the prioritization criteria, as appropriate,
4 to best reflect the needs of Alaskans.

6 **C. LOCAL TAXES**

8 **1. Tax Levying Authority:**

9 The League opposes any action that would diminish the existing statutory authority of
10 local governments to raise needed revenues through the levy of taxes. The League opposes
11 any efforts by the state that would reduce local tax bases or adversely affect the
12 marketability of municipal bonds. The League supports legislation to remove the
13 prohibition in AS 4.21.010. (c) that prevents local voters from approving a special tax on
14 alcohol.

16 **2. Sales and Property Taxes:**

17 **a.** The League supports municipal control over sales and property tax. These taxes are the
18 principal sources of local government revenue and, therefore, require local control.
19 Specifically, the League supports an amendment to AS 29.45.050 (a) to increase the
20 optional residential property tax exemption to \$50,000. Additionally, currently 100 of

1 162 municipalities depend on sales tax of 1% - 7%. The League vigorously defends sales
2 tax as a local option to maintain control over this key local revenue source. Imposition
3 of a state sales tax would jeopardize local economics and cause a reduction in municipal
4 sales tax.

5 **b. Keep Sales Tax Local:** State sales taxes, or statewide mandated sales tax exemptions,
6 are strongly discouraged because they would jeopardize local economies, reduce
7 municipal sales tax revenue, and interfere with the evolution of municipal sales tax
8 codes and exemptions, which have been refined and tailored to individual
9 communities.

11 **3. Property Tax Rate and Assessment Equity:**

12 The League opposes state legislation and initiatives that result in discrimination against
13 individuals, businesses, and classes of property taxpayers. Equitable taxation based on the
14 market value of property is the basis of property tax. Discriminatory tax rates and
15 assessment policies discourage business development and treat individuals inequitably.

17 **4. Mandatory Sales Disclosure:**

18 The League supports legislation to require mandatory sales reporting of real estate
19 transfers. This information will be used by municipalities that levy property tax to assist in
20 assuring more equitable property assessments.

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5. State-Mandated Local Senior Citizen/Disabled Veteran:

The unfunded mandatory state property tax exemptions, such as the senior citizen/disabled veteran property tax exemption, must be funded by the state according to AS 29.45.030 (g), “The state shall reimburse a city or borough for real property tax revenues lost.”

6. Legislative Definition of Tax Exemption Due to Charitable Purposes:

The League supports enactment of a statutory definition of the “charitable purposes” real property tax exemption as requested by the Alaska Association of Assessing Officials.

D. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES’ RETIREMENT AND BENEFITS

1. Funding of Massive Unexpected Increases in PERS/TRS Costs Due to Inaccurate Projections:

The League recognizes the work of the Alaska State Legislature and Governor Palin and her administration to address the PERS/TRS crisis. To avoid catastrophic negative impacts on local services and significant hardship for local taxpayers, the existing unfunded liability of PERS should be addressed through a long term legislative solution in which the State continues to bear its appropriate share of unfunded past service costs. The League still believes the State should bear responsibility for 85% of the unfunded past service cost

1 liability, and the employer paying 15%. The League supports the state permanently paying
2 all past service costs related to the TRS system. In addition, the League urges the State to
3 “pay down” the unfunded PERS/TRS obligations through cash payments and/or Pension
4 Obligation Bonds and should amortize the 8.25% debt over as short a time as possible.
5

6 **2. Increases in Benefits:**

7 The League opposes any legislation that increases the cost of the Public Employees’
8 Retirement System or the Teachers’ Retirement System.
9

10 The League strongly urges the development of a mandatory statutory process that
11 implements a comprehensive actuarial analysis including long-term impacts on the state,
12 municipalities, school districts and university members, and requires a full public and
13 employer review/comment process under the Alaska Retirement Management (ARM)
14 Board, prior to action by the Legislature. Due to the permanent and irrevocable nature of
15 any benefit changes in the PERS/TRS systems, benefit changes should be acted on by the
16 Legislature in the year following introduction to allow for an adequate comprehensive
17 actuarial analysis, discussion with employers, and allow time for the public decision-
18 making process.
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20 **3. Inclusion of Political Subdivisions in State Group Health Insurance:**

1 The League urges the Commissioner of Administration to allow political subdivisions to
2 participate in the state group health insurance plan in order to save money for Alaskan
3 taxpayers without additional cost to the state.

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5 **4. Public Employee Retiree Rehire:**

6 The League supports an amendment to state statute that would only allow a defined
7 benefit retiree to return to work on active service as a defined contribution plan employee.

8
9 **E. STATE-LOCAL FINANCIAL POLICIES AND RELATIONS**

10
11 **1. North Slope Natural Gas Pipeline:**

12 The League strongly endorses the construction of an all Alaskan natural gas pipeline
13 from the North Slope, including regional spurs and petrochemical development as
14 proposed by the Alaska Gas Pipeline Port Authority and the Alaska Natural Gas
15 Development Authority. The program should be structured in such a way to
16 include a provision for a PILT program or other guaranteed mechanism for local
17 municipalities to levy local taxes.

18
19 **2. State Unfunded Mandates on Local Taxpayers:**

1 The League supports a statutory prohibition of state unfunded mandates passed down to
2 municipalities that is similar to the federal statute prohibiting federal unfunded mandates
3 passed down to states. The federal statute was strongly supported by the State of Alaska.
4 The League strongly urges the state to take financial responsibility for the mandated state
5 PERS/TRS cost increases; the mandated Senior Citizen/Disabled Veteran Property Tax
6 Exemption; and the exemption of state-owned property that shifts the costs of protecting
7 and serving state facilities to local taxpayers. The League urges the legislature to resist
8 passing spending mandates to local government through revenue sharing programs.

10 **3. Municipalities Support Negotiated and Funded Public Service Transfers:**

11 The League supports the negotiation of service responsibility transfers from the state to
12 municipalities, provided the state enters into good faith negotiations to identify and
13 transfer appropriate services, which may more effectively be provided on the local level,
14 and ensure adequate, stable resources and timely payment in the future to implement these
15 services. Municipalities should also be allowed to bid on provisions of state services. The
16 League opposes unfunded transfers of state responsibility including food inspections,
17 maintenance of Class III state roads, and any other unilateral unfunded transfers of current
18 state responsibility to communities. The League encourages the state to make safety, code,
19 and maintenance upgrades to transfers before communities accept responsibility.

1 **4. Tort Reform:**

2 The League supports continued tort reform that minimizes the financial exposure of
3 municipalities. Issues of particular concern include, but not limited to, recreational activities
4 on public lands, parks, trails, or facilities.

5
6 **5. Support of the Municipal Bond Bank:**

7 The League urges the state to take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the
8 Municipal Bond Bank continues to be an independent and strong entity to help
9 municipalities meet public facility construction needs at the lowest possible bonding cost.

10
11 **6. Direct Deposit of Transfer Payments:**

12 The League requests the State of Alaska to provide the option to municipalities to receive
13 all municipal transfer payments by direct deposit if requested by the municipality.

14
15 **7. Liens on Property for Delinquent Municipal Payments:**

16 The League supports legislation that would provide municipal authority to lien property to
17 include delinquent utility payments where it does not now exist.

18
19 **8. Tax Caps:**

1 The League opposes any attempt to lower the statutory limits on property taxation levels
2 for service or projects at the local level.

4 **9. Utility Fees:**

5 The League supports legislation to remove prohibitions in AS 42.05.641 that prevent
6 municipalities from assessing fees on utilities regulated by the Regulatory Commission of
7 Alaska.

9 **10. Budget Surpluses:**

10 In the years of budget surplus the legislature is encouraged to balance use of the funds
11 between capital projects, unfunded mandates, deferred maintenance, etc. and to set surplus
12 funds aside for future lean years

14 **F. FEDERAL ISSUES**

16 **1. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR):**

17 (Note: Also in Section IV- Land Use, Resources, and Economic Development) The League
18 urges the Congress of the United States to open the Coastal Plain of the Arctic oil reserve,
19 including the Alaska Native Claims settlement lands, to environmentally responsible oil
20 and gas exploration, development, and production and upon collaboration with the local

1 residents. The League also strongly supports the 90-10 split of revenues as required by the
2 Statehood Act. The League also urges the State of Alaska to redistribute federal mineral
3 revenue sharing funds to local governments.
4

5 **2. PILT:**

6 The League supports full funding of the federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program
7 and legislation that would inflation proof the program. In addition, the League supports
8 the continued inclusion of direct payments to municipalities in the unorganized borough
9 under the PILT program.
10

11 **3. Internet Sales Tax and Out-of-State Sales:**

12 The League supports the efforts of the National League of Cities and National Association
13 of Counties to fairly tax internet and out-of-state transactions, respecting local option to the
14 extent feasible, and allowing collection by parties involved in the transactions.
15

16 **4. National Forest Receipts:**

17 The League opposes the state's addition of any constraints not contained in federal law on
18 how recipient municipalities may spend National Forest Receipts monies. The League also
19 opposes the state's retention of any part of such funds.
20

1 **5. Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Revenue Sharing:**

2 The League endorses enactment by the United States Congress of an OCS revenue sharing
3 program, to be funded annually from the proceeds of the oil, gas, and mineral recovery
4 lease sales on the OCS at fifty percent (50%). The League also endorses an automatic direct
5 pass-through of a fair and equitable amount of the state's allocation under this program to
6 communities affected by OCS activities during exploration, development and production.

7
8 **6. Municipal Bond Tax Exemption:**

9 The League supports the maintenance of the tax exemption of municipal bonds and federal
10 legislation to remove restrictions placed on municipal bonds.

11
12 **7. School Construction Federal Arbitrage Rules:**

13 The League supports federal legislative changes to the Internal Revenue Code (S.526 –
14 Public School Construction Partnership Act and H.R. 1084 – Lifetime Tax Relief Act of
15 1999) modifying public school construction arbitrage rules to extend the arbitrage period
16 from two years to four years. Where most other states enjoy the benefit of up to a 12-month
17 construction season, Alaska communities are faced with a limited construction season.
18 Accordingly, the existing arbitrage rules are extremely restrictive and costly to Alaska
19 taxpayers.

1 **7. Educational Initiatives:**

2 The League urges the federal government to fund the national initiatives regarding
3 education such as Head Start, special education, and No Child Left Behind.

DRAFT

1 **PART II**

2 **EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SERVICES**

3
4 **EDUCATION**

5 **The goal is to ensure the level of state support required by the Alaska**
6 **Constitution so that all residents of Alaska have access to high-quality**
7 **educational opportunities. The schools of Alaska need to be nurtured and guided**
8 **at the local level to meet high standards of performance.**

9
10 **A. BASIC EDUCATION SUPPORT**

11
12 **1. Alaska’s Constitutional Mandate Regarding Education:**

13 The Alaska State Constitution requires that the state establish and maintain a system of
14 public education open to all children of the state. In the opinion of the League, the state has
15 fallen short of this goal. The League recommends the foundation formula be automatically
16 adjusted annually to avoid losing education quality due to the impacts of inflation. Since
17 education is a state responsibility, funding for education shall not be a consideration when
18 comparing state aid to municipalities with the budget for state operations.

19
20 In *MacCauley v. Hildebrand* (1971), the Alaska Supreme Court states:
21

1 *The constitutional mandate for pervasive state authority in the field of education could not be*
2 *clearer. First, the language is mandatory, not permissive. Second, the section not only requires that*
3 *the Legislature “establish” a school system, but also gives to that body the continuing obligation to*
4 *“maintain” the system. Finally, the provision is unqualified: no other unit of government shares*
5 *responsibility or authority.*

6
7 The Alaska Supreme Court reaffirmed this position in subsequent rulings.

8 9 **2. State Education Funding Formula:**

10 The League urges the Governor and Legislature to continually fully fund the education
11 funding formula and monitor the allocation of funds to promote equity in educational
12 opportunities across the state, taking cost differentials into consideration.

13
14 Area Cost Differentials: The League supports program funding adjusted by the Area Cost
15 Differential (the ISER study) to mitigate the economy of scale to offset increased heating
16 and energy costs, travel costs, cost of rural transportation, increased operating costs in all
17 rural areas of the state, and lack of access to goods and services. The League supports
18 funding for a periodic update of the ISER study to ensure currency.

19 20 **3. Early Funding for Education:**

1 The League urges the Legislature to continue early funding so that school districts know
2 the amount of funding available prior to the deadline for submission of school budgets, by
3 forward funding and/or early approval of school funding appropriations.
4

5 **4. Basic Education Adequacy Standards:**

6 An adequate education shall provide all students opportunities to acquire the knowledge
7 and skills necessary to prepare them to take a productive role in society by creating a
8 prepared workforce for Alaska's future.
9

10 The necessary components of an adequate education are:

- 11 a. A locally adopted curricula that meet or exceed Alaska State Standards.
- 12 b. Qualified educators who are provided the time and support for professional
13 development.
- 14 c. A safe and healthy environment, in well-maintained facilities that are capable of
15 supporting appropriate technology for programs.
- 16 d. Facilities:
 - 17 • Adequate construction and condition per Department of Education & Early
18 Development (DEED) standards, including lighting, ventilation
- 19 e. Operations and Maintenance: Adequate funding to:
 - 20 • Provide required heat, light, etc. with costs adjusted regionally

- 1 • Perform required maintenance and replacement
- 2 • Provide student transportation
- 3 • Utilize distance education to meet curriculum needs of all students

4 The League supports that maintenance be fully considered in the education adequacy
5 review.

6 **5. Grants for School Construction and Maintenance Programs:**

- 8 a. The League supports funding of the priority-based school construction and
9 maintenance grant programs established by AS 14.11.007-019 equitably to all districts.
- 10 b. The League supports a grant program for improving energy efficiency of existing and
11 new school facilities.

13 **6. School Performance:**

14 AML Supports:

- 15 a. Evaluative tools for the purpose of making communities aware of their school
16 performance. The purpose of evaluative tools is not to close down schools, but to help
17 communities, families, school staff and students become aware of how well students are
18 learning in their school.
- 19 b. Continued funding for school improvement plans.
- 20 c. Develop and implement funding to prepare teachers to teach in rural communities.

- 1 c. Funding for programs, including scholarships or educational loan forgiveness that
2 encourages Alaskans to teach in Alaska.

3
4 **7. Bonded Indebtedness for School Construction and Major Maintenance:**

- 5 a. The League urges the Governor and Legislature to fully fund all current school debt
6 reimbursement programs. Short funding of school debt reimbursement may put
7 municipalities in default, conflict with bond ballot language, and adversely impact
8 future bond propositions on both the local and state levels if voter trust is damaged.
- 9 b. The League urges the state to authorize additional bonding for the municipal school
10 debt reimbursement in an amount adequate to meet existing school facility needs and
11 allow need and construction costs to determine the limit on the amount of bonding
12 included in the program for any one school district.
- 13 c. The League opposes any effort by the state to reduce school debt reimbursement
14 through deduction of interest earned on school bond proceeds.

15
16 **8. Local Autonomy to Provide Funding:**

17 The League supports local autonomy to supplement state funding while recognizing the
18 importance of maintaining a reasonable local funding “cap” to prevent wide disparities in
19 education quality across the state.

20

1 **9. Block Grants:**

2 The League supports a needs-based block grant that is adequate to meet the specific
3 bilingual and vocational education needs in all communities.

4
5 **B. ASSEMBLY/COUNCIL/SCHOOL BOARD AUTHORITY:**

6
7 The League supports assembly/council authority in education matters. As the local governing
8 body is responsible for levying taxes to support education, it must retain control over
9 expenditures for school operating and capital expenses so that it may strike a balance for the
10 tax burden placed upon local taxpayers.

11
12 **C. STATE POLICIES AFFECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES:**

13
14 **1. Community Schools:**

15 The League recognizes the importance of community schools and supports reinstatement
16 and increased funding for the program. Community schools provide an integral link
17 between a community and its citizens by promoting the advancement and development of
18 learning and skills for citizens in school districts.

19
20 **2. Charter Schools:**

1 The League recognizes the benefits and contributions of charter schools and supports
2 charter schools as authorized by state statutes, provided that local school districts retain the
3 authority to grant and revoke charter schools in their district.
4

5 **3. Early Childhood Education:**

6 The League recognizes the importance of voluntary early childhood education and
7 developmental programs for all children from birth through age eight, and supports
8 continued development, regulation, and maintenance of standards for such programs. The
9 League urges the Legislature to fund public preschool and early childhood programs as a
10 component of state education program funding. The League encourages the Legislature to
11 establish statewide Early Childhood Program standards to promote quality childcare to
12 include a safe, healthy, enriching environment and trained, professional staff with personal
13 background checks that go beyond current childcare licensing requirements.
14

15 **4. Distance Delivery Programs & Other Alternatives:**

16 The League supports distance delivery programs to meet specific educational needs of
17 various student populations. The League recognizes that certain distance delivery
18 opportunities are the best alternative for certain student populations, particularly in remote
19 areas. The state must compensate for any federal funding reductions to distance delivery
20 costs including e-rates.

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5. University of Alaska:

The League supports increased funding for the University of Alaska and its extended campuses to fulfill their role as a critical economic engine for Alaska to:

- Provide a first-class teacher education program with statewide accessibility,
- Provide a first-class undergraduate and graduate education to Alaskan students,
- Provide job training programs to prepare Alaskans to fill existing jobs in the state, as well as further expand the economy,
- Research and develop new technologies and strategies to support the growth of Alaska’s economy, and
- Coordinate with K-12 schools to address unique local needs in development of their teacher education programs.
- Develop entrepreneurial programs.

6. Technical and Vocational Education:

The League supports funding for Technical and Vocational education programs.

7. Consolidation:

1 Any discussion of school district consolidation by the Legislature must involve
2 municipalities and should consider potential impacts, educational benefits, and cost
3 savings.

4
5 **D. FEDERAL POLICIES AFFECTING EDUCATION:**

6
7 **1. NCLB Flexibility:**

8 The League supports DEED's plan for flexibility in the "No Child Left Behind" act.

9
10 **2. Support of School Nutritional Programs:**

- 11 a. The League recognizes the need for school nutrition programs including breakfast and
12 lunch to ensure students are ready to learn, including use of federal funds and local
13 community groups to meet these nutritional needs.
- 14 b. The League encourages the use of Alaskan food sources in school nutritional programs.
- 15
16

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The goal is to preserve to the greatest degree and number local government options and prerogatives to ensure municipal government can be highly responsive to unique local circumstances and to meet the mandate of the Alaska Constitution “to provide for maximum local self government.”

A. PRESERVE LOCAL AUTONOMY

1. Effective, Independent, and Economically Sustainable Local Government:

The League supports legislative and regulatory action that promotes more effective, independent, and economically sustainable local government.

2. Lobbying:

The League supports the continued exemption of municipal officials and employees from the lobbying reporting of Alaska State Statutes.

3. State-wide Ballot Initiatives:

The League opposes restrictions on municipalities’ involvement in state-wide ballot initiatives.

4. Antitrust Laws:

1 The League supports legislation at both the state and federal levels placing municipalities
2 in an equal position with state governments with respect to federal antitrust laws.

3
4 **5. Local Construction:**

5 The League supports amendments to Title 36, the Public Contracts Code, to permit local
6 governments to establish their own notice, reporting, local hire, and prevailing wage
7 requirements and methods for local construction. The League recommends an amendment
8 to Alaska Statute 36.25.010 providing for an inflationary increase in the contract limit for
9 requiring bonds of contractors for public buildings or public works projects. The League
10 opposes any requirements that would have the state set local wage levels.

11
12 **B. ELECTIONS AND REAPPORTIONMENT**

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14 **1. Local Elections:**

15 The League opposes legislation that would diminish the authority of municipalities to
16 conduct their own elections. The League opposes changes to AS 29.20.060 that restricts the
17 ability of a municipality to establish local election districts.

18
19 **2. Amendment to National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter):**

1 The League supports efforts by the Division of Elections to seek amendments to the NVRA
2 to allow for the removal of voters' names from the list of registered voters when voters
3 have not voted in four calendar years.

4 5 **3. Help America Vote Act (HAVA):**

6 The League supports full funding from the Legislature to support the HAVA requirements.

7 8 **C. PUBLIC EMPLOYEES LABOR RELATIONS**

9 10 **1. Alaska Public Employees Labor Relations Act:**

11 The League opposes any legislation that would force municipalities to be subject to the
12 provisions of the Alaska Public Employees Labor Relations Act. Just as strongly, the
13 League opposes any legislative efforts to dictate the provisions of local public employee
14 labor relations ordinances. The League supports legislation to allow each municipality to
15 reject or withdraw from the terms of the Alaska Public Employees Labor Relations Act at
16 any time by action of the governing body. The scope of decisions as to local government
17 finance and labor policies is best left to the local governing body.

18 19 **2. Binding Arbitration:**

1 Binding arbitration on local governments and school districts is not acceptable to the
2 League. Binding arbitration hinders local elected officials' ability to determine their
3 personnel costs and prevents local governments from having complete control of
4 determining the local tax rate. The scope of decisions with regard to what local government
5 can afford for labor is best left to the local bodies possessing that knowledge.

6 7 **D. TRIBAL COUNCIL/LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

8 9 **1. Rural Governance:**

10 The League supports and encourages efforts on the part of the Legislature and other
11 concerned parties to address tribal/state and municipal government relations.

12 13 **2. Partnerships:**

14 The League encourages rural municipalities to partner with the local tribes to provide
15 municipal services where rural municipalities cannot afford to provide services on their
16 own.

17 18 **E. FORMATION AND ALTERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES**

19 20 **1. Local Government Structure in the Unorganized Borough:**

1 The League supports state policies that provide incentives to encourage the formation of
2 boroughs or annexation to boroughs in the unorganized areas of the state, but does not
3 mandate such action. The League urges the Legislature to take a more active role as the
4 Assembly of the Unorganized Borough as mandated by the Constitution.

6 **2. New Incorporation or Annexation:**

7 The League urges the Alaska Legislature to amend Title 29 of Alaska Statutes to allow
8 petitions for borough incorporation on the basis of their merits rather than administratively
9 imposed criteria.

11 **3. Entitlement Lands:**

12 The League supports legislative changes to entitlement lands provisions to encourage
13 existing municipalities to provide services to portions of the unorganized borough through
14 annexation.

16 **F. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

17
18 The state has a duty under Article 10, Section 14 of the Alaska State Constitution to advise and
19 assist local governments. Many communities are on the verge of dissolution and failure of
20 their local government. It is critical that the state assist communities with either sustaining

1 municipalities or the orderly dissolution of failing municipalities. Adequate funding must be
2 provided to the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division
3 of Community Advocacy to provide this advice and their services.

4
5 **1. Local Government Service Center:**

6 The League supports an information, research, service, and training clearinghouse for
7 municipal and tribal local governments in Alaska.

8
9 **2. Local Planning:**

10 The League encourages local governments to include elements of affordable housing in
11 comprehensive and local planning processes.

12
13 **3. Sustainability Programs:**

14 The League urges the state to assist communities to develop sustainability programs.

15
16 **G. CONTRACTING STATE SERVICES**

17
18 The League supports the voluntary contracting of state services to appropriate local
19 governments when such action is cost effective and appropriate and accepted by the local
20 governing body.

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H. STATE POLICIES AFFECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Open Meetings Act:

To increase public understanding and support for legislative policy decisions, the Legislature should hold all meetings open to the public.

Recorder’s Office:

The League supports the funding, maintenance and accessibility of the District Recorder’s Offices, recognizing that the function is vital to all communities, municipalities, businesses, and citizens.

Pro-rata Reduction of Benefits:

The League opposes pro-rata reduction of benefits. When the state underestimates the needs in the budget, this policy shifts the impact to the recipients of the service.

Financial Disclosure Reporting

The League supports returning to the 2007 APOC financial disclosure and conflict of interest forms for local governments.

PUBLIC SERVICES

The goal is to ensure adequate state support for public safety, health, and welfare of all Alaskans. This support should include funding for a systematic review of the criminal justice system. This will allow the Department of Public Safety, the Court System, and the Department of Corrections to evaluate their workloads, coordinate priorities, and fulfill their missions.

A. STATE PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSIBILITY

1. Public Safety:

- a. **State Public Safety Funding:** The League urges the Legislature to provide full funding for the Department of Public Safety so that an appropriate level of service will be provided statewide, including necessary incentives to establish full trooper staffing to protect the health and welfare of our communities.
- b. **Homeland Security:** The League urges the state to pass through funding to municipalities in a timely manner for local homeland security needs, while ensuring, to the extent possible, a regional cooperation and application process.
- c. **VPSO Funding:** The League urges the Legislature to provide appropriate funding, including cost-of-living adjustments and housing, and necessary resources for the Village Public Safety Officer Program directly to the affected non-profit organization who will be fully responsible for this position.

- 1 **d. Training for VPO's/VPSO's:** There is a critical need for mandatory certification, training,
2 and background verification for Village Police Officers (VPO's). Village Public Safety
3 Officers' (VPSO's) and Village Police Officers' (VPO's) training should be certified and
4 recognized by the State of Alaska.
- 5 **e. Alaska Police Standards Certification Tiers:** The League supports authorizing the
6 Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) by statute to create tiers of peace officers, as well
7 as task APSC with creating the corresponding training standards and minimum
8 qualifications for officers. Currently, law enforcement across the state spans a spectrum
9 that ranges from highly-skilled to barely-skilled personnel and departments. Creating
10 tiers will improve standards and structure to current law enforcement programs. A tiered
11 program will codify hiring and training standards across the state, and improve public
12 safety.
- 13 **f. Hazard Mitigation and Fuel Management:** The League advocates legislation supporting
14 funding for communities in the development of hazard mitigation and urban and
15 wildland fuel management programs.
- 16 **g. Firefighting Equipment:** The League supports continued state and federal support for
17 acquisition of replacement of aging fire fighting equipment and for training on the
18 operation of the equipment throughout the state, including fire service areas.
- 19 **h. Local Control of Minimum Fire Staffing:** The League supports and encourages
20 cooperative agreements between municipalities, neighboring departments, and

1 communities in order to meet the minimum staffing requirements set out by national
2 standards.

3 **i. Fire Standards Council:** The League supports continued funding of the Fire Standards
4 Council to develop appropriate training standards for Alaskan communities. However,
5 the League opposes efforts to mandate national standards on Alaskan communities.

6 **j. The Office of Rural Fire Protection:** The League supports continued funding for the
7 Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Prevention, Office of Rural Fire Protection.
8 This office provides the maintenance and continuing education for participants in the
9 successful Project Code Red program.

10 **k. Methamphetamines:** The League supports legislation designed to address the growing
11 problem with methamphetamine production, including public awareness.

12 **l. Animal Cruelty:** The League supports an amendment to the animal cruelty statute to
13 allow either a municipal animal control officer or a peace officer to take an animal into
14 custody without first obtaining an opinion from a licensed veterinarian that cruelty has
15 probably occurred. The League further supports legislation that would allow an animal
16 taken into custody to be placed in a municipal animal shelter without first trying to
17 place the animal in a shelter operated by a veterinarian. Municipal animal control
18 officers and facilities are adequate to assess and care for animals that are victims of
19 cruelty and can arrange for proper veterinary care, if needed.

20
21 **2. Emergency Communications:**

1 **a. E-911 Emergency Dispatch Services**

- 2 • For Statewide E-911 service, ensure that all residents and visitors within the State of
- 3 Alaska have access to E-911. Basic E-911 service is not available to all communities in the
- 4 State of Alaska, due primarily to a lack of designated Primary Public Safety Answering
- 5 Points (PSAP's).
- 6 • The League supports amending current Alaska statutes so that the E-911 surcharge is
- 7 equitable for all devices and modes capable of calling E-911 and provide a mechanism for
- 8 sufficient funding to accommodate the changing requirements of E-911 public safety
- 9 answering points. Current E-911 technology in the State is not compatible with Next
- 10 Generation calling services used by the public, including Voice over Internet Protocol,
- 11 Short Messaging Service, Instant Messaging, and Telematics.
- 12 • The League supports amending the current Alaska statutes so that the Regulatory
- 13 Commission of Alaska (RCA) has clear authority for the local exchange carrier
- 14 provision of E-911 dispatch calling services and develop a statewide organization with
- 15 local representation and sufficient authority to administer the needs of a statewide E-
- 16 911 system. Many issues related to the effectiveness of E-911 emergency calling must be
- 17 resolved at a statewide level. The State of Alaska does not have an effective mechanism
- 18 for administering the complex operational and technical issues related to E-911.

19 **b. Development of a Statewide Integrated Emergency Radio Communications System:**

20 The League supports the continued development and implementation of the Alaska's

21 Land Mobile Radio System (ALMR), to ensure good stable communications during

1 disasters. However, the League opposes passing on the operations and maintenance costs
2 to local jurisdictions. Passing these costs on to local governments will drastically reduce
3 the number of participants on this system, further reducing statewide interoperable
4 communications

6 **3. Youth:**

7 **a. Juvenile Crime Issues:** The League recognizes that juvenile crime continues to be a
8 serious problem in Alaska. The nature of juvenile crime is becoming more violent, and
9 the cost of vandalism is increasing. The League recommends that juvenile laws be
10 equitably enforced. While accountability and consequence should be a part of our
11 juvenile system, without effective follow-through with case-managed social services
12 and rehabilitation programs, the system will continue to fail our youth. Confidentiality
13 should be balanced between the public's need to know and the juvenile offender's best
14 interest.

15 **b. Jurisdiction for Juveniles:** Jurisdiction for minor offenses for juvenile crimes should be
16 extended to the municipalities that want to participate. The League recognizes and
17 encourages increased state and local support and funding of youth courts.

18 **c. Juvenile Detention and Correction Costs:** The League supports a state/local process to
19 develop consistent policies for state/local roles in providing police, jail, and prosecution
20 services. Juvenile detention and correctional programs require different facilities. The

1 League supports the construction and operation of these facilities in local communities
2 to minimize transportation costs and maintain community and family involvement.

3 **d. Rehabilitation Programs:** The League supports the restoration of funding for
4 rehabilitation programs that include education, mental health counseling, job skills, and
5 drug and alcohol treatment. Youth treatment programs should include long-term
6 residential care and after-care treatment.

7 **e. Preventive Programs:** The League supports preventive programs for youth and
8 families.

9 **f. National and Community Service:** The League supports the federal AmeriCorps and
10 VISTA programs. AmeriCorps and VISTA provide public services to many Alaskan
11 communities and train young people to become community leaders by giving them
12 responsibility. Many of Alaska's leaders are former Americorps or VISTA volunteers.

13 **g. Gang Activities:** Increased gang activity and growth must be addressed now by state
14 and local authorities.

16 **4. Jails and Correction Facilities:**

17 **a. Community Jail Funding:** The League supports legislation that fully funds community
18 jails. Community jails serve all Alaskans and provide a great savings to the State by
19 reducing inter-state prisoner transportation costs. Municipalities should not pick up the

1 cost for a state responsibility. The League supports a balanced and equitable formula to
2 fund all correctional facilities in the state.

3 **b. New Jail Space:** Overcrowding in jails is a serious problem and new jail space is
4 needed. Alaska could gain through economic multiplier effects by housing Alaskan
5 prisoners in state. The League recommends that additional funding for new jail space
6 and operations be appropriated. Public safety for all Alaskans is critically affected by
7 the availability of jails. The cost of building and operating jails is beyond the financial
8 abilities of local municipalities.

9 **c. Contract Jails and Holding Facilities:** There is a strong need for increased funding for
10 contract jails. The state should accept an equitable share of staff training and liability
11 associated with operating these jails and set standards for the safe operation and
12 maintenance of facilities. The League urges the state to provide funds for additional
13 community jails in areas that do not have them because of the lack of state funding.

14 **d. Halfway Houses:** Halfway houses serve an appropriate role in the correctional process.
15 The League supports locating these in communities to which the prisoner will return
16 upon release. The state should reach agreement with the local governments on the
17 location of halfway houses in their area.

18 **e. Probation/Parole:** The League supports full staffing of probation and parole offices
19 throughout the state.

1 f. **Corrections Officer Training:** The League urges the State to increase corrections officer
2 training availability to ensure timely receipt of this training for newly hired community
3 jail corrections officers.

4
5 **5. Courts:**

6 a. **Prosecution Costs:** The League recommends full funding for the Department of Law so
7 that criminals are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. The League opposes any
8 legislation that forces municipalities to prosecute criminals.

9 b. **Criminal Defense Costs:** The League recommends the state provide full financial
10 support for the Public Defender Agency and the Office of Public Advocacy so that all
11 citizens may receive the full benefit of their state and federal constitutional rights.

12 c. **Funding:** The League recommends full funding for the Alaska Court System for the
13 efficient administration of justice.

14 d. **Tribal Courts:** The League urges the state to recognize shared jurisdiction between
15 state, local governments, and tribes for misdemeanors and offenses to reduce costs to
16 the state and local governments, recognizing tribal courts can be more effective, and in
17 some cases, tribal courts may be the only alternative.

18 e. **Research on Therapeutic Courts:** The League supports researching the cost and
19 effectiveness of the therapeutic court program throughout the state.
20

1 **6. Workers' Compensation for Emergency Service Personnel:**

2 The League opposes any changes to workers' compensation laws that eliminate local
3 government options for alternative coverage of volunteer firefighters, police, paramedics,
4 and other emergency service personnel. The League opposes any changes in the law that
5 would presume that any heart, respiratory, or circulatory disease, or cancer arose out of
6 past or present service as a firefighter or other emergency service provider. The League
7 further opposes proposals to change the basis for computing compensation for injured
8 volunteers and urges continuation of current provisions establishing the rate of
9 compensation for volunteer firefighters.

10
11 **7. Training:**

12 The League urges the Legislature to assure, through state assistance, that local, full-time, on-call
13 responders, volunteer police, fire, emergency medical, and other emergency preparedness
14 personnel throughout the State of Alaska have access to adequate facilities and program
15 resources for training.

16
17 **8. Violence Prevention:**

18 Recognizing that prevention and education are more cost efficient than adjudication, the
19 League supports and encourages programs and funding which prevent and intervene in
20 the cycle of violence.

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B. HEALTH

1. Statewide Comprehensive Health Planning and Negotiation of Governmental

Roles:

The League supports development of a statewide plan identifying core physical and mental health care needs and defining the roles and options for government, tribal, nonprofit, and private sector programs for the prevention and treatment of injury or illness.

2. Public Health Nursing:

The League supports full funding of public health nursing.

3. Health Care Costs:

The League urges the development of state policies and programs aimed at providing affordable and accessible medical care for all Alaskans, including exploration of pooling, utilization review, and a method of providing insurance for underinsured and uninsured residents of Alaska. Municipal governments must be involved in the discussion of any proposal dealing with health care costs. Proposed statewide solutions should allow for locally developed alternatives.

1 **4. Hospital and Health Facility Funding:**

2 The League supports state assistance for hospital and health facility construction and
3 operating costs.

4
5 **5. EMS Equipment:**

6 The League supports funding for EMS Capital Equipment.

7
8 **6. Funding for Distance Delivery of Education for Nurses and Nursing Assistants:**

9 Acknowledging the serious shortage of qualified nursing personnel across the state, the
10 League urges the state to fund the University of Alaska and technical education centers to
11 increase the programs and delivery models which will allow students to obtain most of their
12 training in their local communities through distance delivery to achieve licenses in Practical
13 Nursing (LPN), Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN), Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing
14 (BSN), and Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA).

15
16 **7. Telemedicine:**

17 The League supports telemedicine services throughout Alaska.

18
19 **C. LIABILITY ISSUES**

1 **1. Liability for Failure to Take an Incapacitated Person into Custody:**

2 The League supports removing any implied liability of a municipality for failing to take a
3 person incapacitated by alcohol, drugs, or mental illness into custody.
4

5 **2. Liability for Emergency Response Outside Municipal Boundaries:**

6 The League supports legislation limiting liability when a municipal service is provided
7 outside municipal boundaries during an emergency.
8

9 **3. Liability of Health Clinics and Hospitals for Actions of Non-Employee:**

10 The League supports legislation to limit the liability of a municipality and its local health
11 facility for actions of a non-employee.
12

13 **4. Liability for Corrections Community Service Workers:**

14 The League supports legislation that would require the State of Alaska to assume full
15 responsibility for medical costs and liability related to state court-ordered corrections
16 community service workers.
17

18 **5. Liability for Jail/Prison Operations:**

1 The League supports legislation providing reasonable statutory immunity from civil
2 damages resulting from an act or omission in the administration, operation, or monitoring of
3 a correctional facility.

4 5 **6. Municipal Liability Limitations:**

6 The League supports legislation which limits liability of the state and municipalities for
7 attorney fees.

8 9 **D. STATE-FUNDED SOCIAL PROGRAMS**

10
11 The League urges the state to adequately fund essential social programs:

- 12 • Child protection
- 13 • Substance abuse
- 14 • Domestic and sexual abuse
- 15 • Suicide prevention
- 16 • Fetal Alcohol Effect/Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- 17 • Mental Health

18 19 **E. ALASKA TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

1 **1. Adequate Funding and Job Opportunities:**

2 a. The League urges the state to match federal funding dollar-for-dollar under the Alaska
3 Temporary Assistance Program.

4 b. The League urges the state to fund childcare, work services, and other services designed
5 to help welfare recipients into the workforce statewide.

6 c. The League urges the state to provide funding for training and economic development
7 to further increase employment opportunities statewide.

8
9 **2. Safety Net:**

10 The League urges a state-maintained safety net for those moving from welfare to work. This
11 net may vary with each recipient, but should encompass assistance needed for childcare,
12 transportation, training and education, health care, and counseling.

13
14 **3. Focus:**

15 The focus of the Welfare to Work Program should remain on finding and creating jobs,
16 providing supportive services, protecting the welfare of children, and keeping people
17 employed.

1 **PART III**

2 **LAND USE, RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

3
4 **LAND USE**

5 **The goal of the Land Use section is to encourage the adoption of policies that will**
6 **establish the authority, knowledge, and intergovernmental cooperation**
7 **necessary for municipalities to document ownership and control of land and**
8 **manage public lands.**

9
10 **A. LOCAL OPTIONS**

11
12 **1. Planning, Zoning and Land Use:**

- 13 **a.** The League believes that local planning and zoning laws, review processes, and land
14 use and subdivision regulations apply to all state land use actions. This will allow for
15 comprehensive local control of community development, including the same access
16 requirements as municipalities or private developers.

17
18 **B. LAND SELECTION**

19
20 **1. Easements, Conveyance & Land Use:**

1 The League supports programs to identify easements and entitlement lands, and requests
2 all land transfers be conducted expeditiously.

3 4 **2. Conveyance and Land Use:**

- 5 **a.** The state should reevaluate its land survey criteria for conveying large, remote parcels
6 in order to save time and money.
- 7 **b.** The League urges cooperative efforts to resolve conveyance issues of lands not yet
8 jointly agreed upon by municipal, state, and federal government on lands affected by
9 the municipal land selection process.
- 10 **c.** The state and federal government and their agencies should clean up all hazardous
11 material, including previously undisclosed hazardous material at active and formerly
12 used defense sites. The cleanup effort should meet EPA and Alaska Department of
13 Environmental Conservation (ADEC) standards and standards acceptable to the
14 community that are consistent with the intended use of the property.
- 15 **d.** The League opposes any changes to Section 14, paragraph (c) (3) of ANCSA that would
16 reduce the ability of municipalities to receive their full entitlement to lands.

17 18 **C. STATE LAND MANAGEMENT**

19 20 **1. State Land Use Decisions:**

1 The state and its instrumentalities should fully include municipalities in state land use
2 decisions for lands within or adjacent to a municipality or land use decisions having
3 potential impact on municipalities.

4 5 **2. Land Disposals:**

6 The disposal of interests in State lands to private interests, including the sales price, should
7 be recorded by the state at the District Recorder's offices within 30 days.

8 9 **3. Enforcement:**

10 The state should provide the resources to actively manage and enforce existing state land
11 management policies and regulations.

12 13 **D. COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT**

14 15 **1. Local Control and Participation:**

16 The League supports maximum local control and involvement in the development,
17 management, and implementation, and expedited appeals process of coastal planning and
18 policies. The League recognizes the vital role that coastal districts and coastal resource
19 service areas (CRSA's) provide in reviewing these plans and policies. The program should
20 continue to include review and evaluation processes.

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2. Agency Review of Local District Programs and Projects:

The League supports legislation or administrative actions that would require state and federal agencies to disclose all comments and recommendations to municipalities prior to the approval of projects.

3. Notice:

The League urges the State of Alaska and the federal government to provide immediate notice of changes to coastal management programs to communities impacted by such changes.

4. Quality Standards:

The state should reinstate the air, land and water quality standards into the Coastal Zone Management policy.

E. WATERSHEDS

1. Protection and Maintenance:

The league supports the protection, restoration, and maintenance of watersheds.

1 **2. Coordination and Funding:**

2 The League encourages the state to improve funding for watershed protection, and the
3 more efficient use of government resources.

4
5 **F. WETLANDS**

6 The League supports the protection restoration, ~~and~~ maintenance and use of wetlands, where
7 appropriate, for private and public infrastructure needs. The League supports the development
8 of a regionalized rapid assessment approach to evaluate wetlands for unique characteristics.

9
10 **G. LAND SALES AND SUBDIVISIONS**

11
12 **1. Recording Requirements:**

13 All property owners should be required to record any land transfer or boundary change
14 within 30 days and approval should be required before any land transfer is recorded by the
15 District Recorder's Office including the sales price.

16
17 **2. Inspections:**

18 The League urges the state to fund and reinstate its program for inspection of individual
19 septic systems and water quality.

1 **3. ADEC Review of Plats:**

2 Where adequate municipal oversight does not exist, the League supports the Alaska
3 Department of Environmental Conservation’s review of subdivision plats for adequate on-
4 site water and sewage disposal systems.

5
6 **H. GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

7
8 Computer based geographical information systems should continue to be coordinated and
9 standardized to allow for sharing of data between state and local agencies. Data should be
10 web-based and readily accessible for public information and use.

11
12 **I. STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES AFFECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

13
14 **1. Recreational Opportunities:**

15 The League strongly supports maintaining existing state parks and facilities.

16
17 **2. Fish and Game Resources:**

18 The League supports Alaska’s right and responsibility to manage its own fish and game
19 resources.

20

1 **3. Regulatory Authority:**

2 The League opposes state and federal legislation that attempts to limit land use regulatory
3 authority of municipalities by any means.

4
5 **4. Gravel Extraction:**

6 The League supports legislation that sets priorities for the reasonable extraction of gravel
7 and sediments in or near streambeds for prevention, control, and mitigation of erosion,
8 flooding, or damage. Extraction for public purposes should be free of royalty payments to
9 state and federal governments.

10
11 **5. Leaking Storage Tanks:**

12 The League strongly encourages the state to reauthorize the Board of Storage Tank
13 Assistance, the underground storage tank revolving loan fund, and the tank cleanup loan
14 program.

15
16 **6. Transfer of Federal Lands:**

17 The League urges the State of Alaska to assist and cooperate with tribes, municipalities and
18 other entities for the expeditious transfer or retransfer of federal lands.

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20 **J. GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE**

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In order to address the effects of global climate change, the League encourages the State of Alaska to undertake initiatives for energy conservation and to support development of alternative, renewable and clean energy resources; address environment, infrastructure, and potentially conflicting federal compliance impacts in order to establish a long-term, sustainable plan for the state and local communities.

1. Funding for Research on the Effects of Climate Change in Alaska:

The Alaska Municipal League supports increased state and federal funding for research in Alaska on the effects of global climate change and on feasible ways to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Increased funding should particularly be directed to research within the University of Alaska system, including research regarding renewable and alternative energy, energy efficiency, and social and economic costs of climate change.

RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The goal is to support responsible and sustainable community economic development and resource management and provide for community growth. In addition, the League supports policies that will assist communities to establish economic development programs that improve quality of life through incentives for concurrent, diversified and vertically integrated economic development, such as: high tech industry, Made in Alaska, Alaska gas line, and to promote tourism, international trade, fisheries, agriculture, timber, oil, gas, and mineral development, and their associated, value-added components. The League also supports policies for the development of the human resources in Alaska's communities, focusing on creating and sustaining private sector employment.

A. AUTHORITY AND INCENTIVES

1. Cooperative Projects:

The League encourages expansion of a "partnership" approach to economic development.

2. Alaska Regional Development Organizations:

a. Reauthorization and Funding: The League urges the state Legislature to reauthorize and increase funding to the Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDOR), and to leverage more private funds.

1 **4. Denali Commission:**

2 The League supports the Denali Commission as it improves infrastructure, supports
3 training, encourages economic development, and plays a key role in coordinating federal
4 agencies and services in Alaska.

5
6 **5. Workforce Development Act:**

7 The League supports the reinstatement of funding to support continued employment and
8 reemployment at the local level.

9
10 **6. Micro-enterprise and Small Business:**

11 The League urges the state administration and Legislature to provide improved
12 programming and assistance for the development of the entrepreneurship, micro-
13 enterprise and small business sectors of the Alaskan economy.

14
15 **B. IMPACT**

16
17 **1. Impact Assistance:**

18 The League urges a collaborative approach of municipal, state, and federal legislation that
19 would provide appropriate financial assistance as identified by the municipalities facing
20 socioeconomic impacts of development or other activity.

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2. Development Projects:

The League urges that development projects substantially impacting communities be reviewed by the municipalities and that municipalities be involved as full partners in the development process.

3. Natural Resource Development Policies:

The League supports the adoption and implementation by the State of Alaska of a Natural Resource Development Plan, in cooperation with the private sector. Such a plan would include policies for the exploration, inventory, planning, conservation, development, mitigation of impacts, processing, and marketing of natural resources in a manner that produces maximum long-term benefit for the state and municipalities.

C. STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES AFFECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

1. Recreation and Tourism:

a. Promotion and Attraction: The League encourages assistance to municipalities for local and regional tourism promotion.

b. Rural Tourism Development: The League supports implementation of rural tourism development including non-consumptive eco-tourism, and marketing strategies that

1 assist rural communities' residents in realizing the potential of tourism in their
2 communities, and in understanding the challenges and impacts.

3 **c. Alaska Tourism Marketing:** The League supports increased funding for Alaska
4 tourism marketing.

5 **d. Independent Travelers:** The League supports increased marketing efforts to attract
6 more independent travelers. The positive economic impact from independent travelers
7 benefits many communities around the state.

8 **e. Visitor Industry:** The League supports providing a business and regulatory
9 environment that will encourage the growth of Alaska's visitor industry and not impose
10 additional requirements that are burdensome, duplicative, and non-productive.

11 **f. Parks and Recreational Facilities:** The League supports increased funding for staff,
12 maintenance and operation of parks, trails for motorized and non-motorized users, and
13 other recreational facilities to accommodate, disperse, and expand recreation
14 opportunities for residents and visitors.

15 **g. International Exchanges:** The League supports local, state, and federal efforts to
16 encourage trade, tourism, and exchanges of educational and scientific projects between
17 the people of the State of Alaska and international communities.

18
19 **2. Fisheries:**

1 The League urges the Governor and Legislature to develop a long-term statewide policy on
2 commercial fisheries, focusing on scientific resource management and limiting political
3 influence.

4 **a. Management and Enforcement:** The League supports adequate funding for
5 management, research, and enforcement, which will assure a sustained maximum
6 harvest on a long-term basis.

7 **b. Fisheries Enhancement, Protection, and Projects:** The League supports fisheries
8 enhancement and protection programs, funded through Alaska Department of Fish &
9 Game cost recovery and additional legislative appropriation.

10 **c. Fisheries Habitat Protection:** The League encourages the state to develop programs
11 and policies for fisheries habitat protection in cooperation with affected local
12 governments.

13 **d. Adequate Shares for Alaska under Salmon Treaties:** The League urges state and
14 federal negotiators on the North Pacific Salmon Commission to ensure that Alaskans
15 have a proportionate and equitable share of the fish controlled by treaty.

16 **e. Fisheries Research:** The League supports increased state and federal fisheries, marine
17 mammal, and avian research programs the League supports full federal funding for and
18 the domestic observer program.

19 **f. Marine Mammal Research:** The League urges the state to fund peer reviewed scientific
20 research on any marine mammals that are threatened or listed as depleted under the
21 Marine Mammal Protection act (MMPA) or the Endangered Species Act.

- 1 **g. Fisheries Business Tax Credits:** The League supports fisheries business tax credits that
2 would allow onshore fish processors to receive credit for capital improvements to fish
3 processing plants for value added processing. The League supports the application of
4 the fisheries business tax credit to cooperative or municipal utility construction related
5 to value added processing.
- 6 **h. Marketing:** The League supports increased state funding of the Alaska Seafood
7 Marketing Institute (ASMI), with emphasis on wider distribution of higher value
8 products. The League supports a geographic balance on the Board of Directors of ASMI.
- 9 **i. Fresh Product Marketing Access:** The League supports the development of marine, air,
10 and ground transportation links for the purpose of enhancing the marketing of fresh
11 fish and higher value products.
- 12 **j. Crab Management:** The League strongly urges the state to retain jurisdiction over
13 management of the crab fishery in the federal Exclusive Economic Zone. The
14 Legislature is urged to appropriate any additional funds necessary to allow the state to
15 comply with federal requirements.
- 16 **k. Mariculture:** The League supports the development of a stable, year-round, private
17 shellfish mariculture industry, in a manner compatible with existing fisheries and other
18 traditional activities.
- 19 **l. Aquaculture:** The league supports Alaska's salmon ocean ranching program and
20 continues to oppose finfish aquaculture.
21

1 **m. State Control of Fishery Management:** The League urges the state to fund research
2 necessary to ensure that the state maintains management authority over groundfish and
3 other fishery allocations within federal waters off Alaska. The League urges the North
4 Pacific Fisheries Management Council to incorporate provisions in any comprehensive
5 rationalization plan relating to federal fisheries off Alaska's coast to ensure processing
6 onshore and to maximize opportunities for Alaskan fishermen to enter and participate
7 in these fisheries.

8 **n. High Seas Interception:** The League supports continued state and federal efforts to end
9 the high seas interception of Alaska's fisheries resources and illegal taking of fish in the
10 U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.

11 **o. Fish Escapement Count:** The League urges the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to
12 review its fish escapement count procedures for accuracy on all anadromous rivers and
13 seek broad public input.

14 **p. Groundfish Rationalization:** The League urges the state to call upon the North Pacific
15 Fisheries Management Council for a moratorium on rationalization of Gulf of Alaska
16 ground fisheries until the social and economic impacts to coastal communities are
17 understood.

18 **q. Socio-Economic Impacts:** The League urges the state to call upon the North Pacific
19 Fisheries Management Council to use data regarding socio and economic impacts on
20 communities for revision of existing and for development of future fisheries
21 management policy.

1 **r. Crew Data Collection:** The League urges the state to expedite the development of
2 collecting crew data for use in social and economic impact studies, for use in existing
3 and future fisheries rationalization/management programs.

4
5 **3. Agriculture and Timber:**

6 **a. Agriculture:**

7 The League supports state and local encouragement of agriculture through farmland
8 preservation, the opening up of new agriculture lands with adequate road access, the
9 authority for municipal tax credits, education and research, and aggressive support of
10 the development, processing, and marketing of Alaska agricultural products.

11
12 **b. Timber:**

13 The League supports the sustainable management of state-owned, municipally-owned,
14 or privately-owned timber resources.

15
16 **4. Oil, Gas, and Mineral Resources:**

17 **a. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR):** The League urges the Congress of the
18 United States to open the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Oil Reserve to environmentally
19 responsible oil and gas exploration, development, and production. The League strongly
20 supports the 90-10 split of revenues as required by the Statehood Act.

- 1 **b. National Petroleum Reserve Alaska:** The League supports oil and gas leasing and
2 other mineral entry in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska.
- 3 **c. Exploration and Development:** The League encourages the State of Alaska to promote
4 environmentally responsible oil, gas, and mineral exploration and development that is
5 not detrimental to Alaskan fisheries or subsistence activities.
- 6 **d. Tax and Royalty Incentives:** The League supports the implementation by the State of
7 Alaska of tax incentives that promote oil and gas exploration in mature and marginal oil
8 and gas fields that would otherwise be uneconomical.
- 9 **e. Rural Natural Gas Wells:** The League supports development of rural natural gas wells
10 for local consumption and urges the state to fund a pilot program to test this
11 technology.
- 12 **f. Mineral Development:** The League supports private exploration and development of
13 mineral resources including state-owned minerals, as well as the review of resource
14 extraction fees. The League also urges the State of Alaska to redistribute federal mineral
15 revenue sharing funds to local governments. The League supports a review of tax and
16 royalty rates for mineral extraction.
- 17 **g. State and Local Cooperation:** The League encourages state and federal agencies to fully
18 participate with local governments in public processes associated with resource
19 development decisions made by those entities.
- 20 **h. Carbon Sequestration:** The League supports the study of carbon sequestration with
21 proportionate amounts of those carbon sequestration credits going to municipalities.

1 **i. In-state Refining:** The League strongly urges the state to fund the study and support
2 the retention and expansion of oil refining and petro-chemical development.

3
4 **7. Waste Disposal:**

5 The League encourages the state and federal governments to adopt and maintain
6 acceptable standards concerning waste disposal from the processing of all resources.

7
8 **8. Human Resources:**

9 **a. Alaska Hire:** The League supports and encourages all efforts on the part of the
10 Governor and the Legislature to implement a local, regional, and statewide hire policy.

11 **b. Training Incentives:** The League supports the development of incentives that would
12 encourage the Alaska education system, contractors, and other employers to train and
13 hire local workers.

14
15 **9. Rural and Affordable Housing:**

16 **a. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation:** The League supports full funding for the Alaska
17 Housing Finance Corporation to meet general U.S. housing standards.

18 **b. Tribal Designated Housing Entities:** The League supports and encourages any effort to
19 include language in state policies, statutes, and regulations that would give Tribal

1 Designated Housing Entities the same access to planning activities, loans, and grants as
2 are now available to Alaska Housing Authorities.

3 c. The League encourages development of affordable housing.
4

DRAFT

1 **PART IV**

2 **PUBLIC WORKS & INFRASTRUCTURE**

3
4 **The goal is to recognize the importance of transportation, energy programs and**
5 **utilities infrastructure to the economic and social well being of Alaska**
6 **communities, to support planning for an integrated transportation system, to**
7 **assist local governments in providing potable water, wastewater treatment,**
8 **solid waste disposal and other utilities and to advocate an equitable approach to**
9 **the funding of construction and maintenance of these facilities.**

10
11 **A. PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY**

12
13 **1. Deferred Maintenance:**

14 The League believes deferred maintenance of public infrastructure is a shared
15 responsibility between state and local government. The League supports the use of revenue
16 sources other than just local taxation to fund maintenance that has been deferred. The
17 League urges the state to share state revenues and recommends a high priority be placed
18 on funding the backlog of deferred maintenance projects on the state and local level.

19
20 **2. Bond Funding:**

1 Bonding is a funding mechanism for infrastructure development and deferred
2 maintenance. Bond funding is proactive, not reactive, therefore, the League supports
3 bonding as a responsible funding mechanism for statewide infrastructure development
4 and deferred maintenance of local and state facilities. The League urges the state to
5 maintain current bonding commitments and provide additional funding of unprecedented
6 increases in labor and material costs.

8 **3. Davis-Bacon Projects:**

9 The League advocates raising the threshold for state Davis-Bacon project filing
10 requirements from \$2,000 to \$50,000 per project.

12 **4. Force Accounting:**

13 The use of force accounts is an effective tool to provide training and employment
14 opportunities for rural Alaskan communities, while developing needed local infrastructure.

15 The League supports a municipality's right to use force accounts without the imposition of
16 limitations.

18 **5. Municipal Capital Matching Grants:**

19 The League supports funding the Municipal Capital Matching Grants Program as the most
20 efficient and effective means of constructing needed public facilities. The construction and

1 maintenance of public facilities is one of the most critical responsibilities of government. It
2 is necessary for the state to share the resources of the people of Alaska with its political
3 subdivisions to meet this responsibility at the level of government closest to the people.
4

5 **6. Retainage Accounts:**

6 The League encourages the state to base the retainage account interest payment
7 requirements on actual interest earned by municipalities.
8

9 **7. Financial Sustainability:**

10 In order to protect infrastructure investments, the League acknowledges that maintenance
11 and operations must be considered in the overall funding of projects. Therefore, the League
12 recommends local participation in the development of reasonable criteria to ensure projects
13 are sustainable.
14

15 **8. Construction Standards Related to Climate Impact:**

16 The League encourages the state to consider recommendations for new construction
17 standards as identified by the State's energy plan and the State's climate change panel.
18

19 **B. MUNICIPAL INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING**

20

1 **1. Statewide Comprehensive Transportation Plan:**

2 The League supports the continued development of a statewide comprehensive
3 transportation plan that combines overall state, regional, and local transportation needs.
4 Planning should place more emphasis on the needs and priorities of communities as
5 identified by residents and local governments.

6
7 **2. Sustainable Transportation Funding:**

8 The League urges the state to develop and implement a mechanism to create a fund that
9 will result in a long-term sustainable state-funded transportation program.

10
11 **C. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION**

12
13 **1. State Transportation System Maintenance:**

14 The League supports an increased level of funding for maintenance of the state
15 transportation system (roads, bridges, bike paths, trails, etc.) to reflect the increasing costs
16 and age of the system.

17
18 **2. State Local Road Maintenance:**

19 The League supports legislation to provide funding for local roads by allocating a portion
20 of the state gas tax receipts, motor vehicle registration fees, and federal highway funds.

1 Consolidation of state and local road maintenance operations may provide opportunities
2 for cost savings and efficiencies. The League supports transfer of responsibility for road
3 maintenance or ownership of roads from the state to a municipality only upon agreement
4 by the affected municipality.

6 **3. Federal Highway Funds:**

7 The League strongly recommends the state Department of Transportation and Public
8 Facilities:

- 9 a. Ensure the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) follows the Federal
10 Highways Administration (FHWA) process to better involve citizens and local
11 governments in the funding and implementation of prioritized local projects.
- 12 b. Provide for an appropriate sharing of federal receipts for local road needs.
- 13 c. Expend at least 10 percent of the surface transportation program for construction of
14 project upgrades and at least 10 percent for safety programs.
- 15 d. Set aside a percentage of federal highway funds be allocated for the maintenance of
16 road, trail, and transit projects.
- 17 e. Provide earmark funding directly to communities.
- 18 f. Support local control of Metropolitan Area Planning Organization (MPO)
19 transportation solutions.

1 g. Enter into a Memoranda of Agreement with local tribal governments for road
2 maintenance and construction.
3

4 **4. Trail Marking:**

5 The League strongly urges the continuation of a statewide program of uniform permanent
6 trail marking and annual winter maintenance and trail staking be established and funded
7 by the state, with local input.
8

9 **5. Costs of Railroad Crossings:**

10 The Alaska Municipal League supports the Alaska Railroad having the responsibility and
11 incurring the cost of maintaining railroad crossings, traffic safety signals, and related
12 infrastructure.
13

14 **6. Historic Rights of Way (R.S. 2477):**

15 The League supports continued research and identification of traditional public rights for
16 rights-of-way on property as provided by R.S. 2477, and provide for a funding mechanism
17 to assert designation.
18

19 **7. Public Transit:**

1 The League supports development and funding of cost-effective public transit systems. The
2 Statewide Transportation Plan should include a statewide plan for public transportation.
3 The League supports an annual appropriation to match federal and local funding to
4 expand transportation services across the State and to include fuel cost reimbursement as
5 part of the State energy assistance program. The League encourages the Legislature to
6 explore changes to the pupil transportation funding requirements that would allow
7 blending of public and pupil transit systems to achieve economies of scale.

8 9 **8. Pedestrian/Bicycle Lanes:**

10 The League supports legislation to require that provisions for and funding of
11 pedestrian/bicycle lanes and/or paths be included on all major state road and rail projects
12 where determined by local municipalities.

13 14 **D. AIR TRANSPORTATION**

15 16 **1. Airport Maintenance:**

17 The League supports adequate funding for equipment, maintenance, and operation of
18 airports, including Homeland Security requirements.

19 20 **2. Transfer of Land and Facilities for Municipal Airports:**

1 The League supports the transfer of federal and/or state lands and facilities to
2 municipalities, if requested, to provide for needed construction and expansion of
3 municipal-owned airport facilities and operations.

4 5 **3. Airport Construction Assistance:**

6 The League supports an equitable approach to state construction assistance for both state
7 and municipal airports and the concept of necessary expansion and upgrading of airports,
8 airport facilities, and air navigational aids in Alaska.

9 10 **4. Minimum Runway Lengths**

11 The League supports that runway lengths be adequate to ensure safe transportation and to
12 meet each community's need.

13 14 **E. MARINE TRANSPORTATION**

15 16 **1. Port and Harbor Development:**

17 a. The League urges the state to fully fund deferred maintenance improvements to port
18 and harbor facilities through the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant program. Enable
19 municipalities to use the proceeds from the transfer of state harbors for the local
20 matching share of harbor matching grant program.

- 1 b. The League supports the transfer to municipalities of federal and/or state lands to
2 provide for needed expansion and/or development of municipal-owned port and
3 harbor facilities and operations.
- 4 c. The League supports state funding of maintenance for state owned harbors and not
5 deferring the cost to the local government.
- 6 d. The League urges the State to complete a comprehensive statewide ports and harbors
7 plan.

8

9 **2. Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS):**

10 Long-range planning and stable funding for maintenance, operation, and expansion of the
11 system are necessary to ensure the most effective service to the users of the system and the
12 most efficient operation of the vessels. The League strongly recommends:

- 13 a. Changes to adopted AMHS Regional Transportation Plans must allow for community
14 input and ensure adequate notice to minimize economic impacts to communities and
15 their businesses.
- 16 b. Funding be allocated to purchase new vessels and technology as needed, to replace the
17 aging fleet and to comply with the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) deadlines.
- 18 c. Funding that may currently be used for new vessel purchases, such as Shakwak funds,
19 be used for such purpose and not for other transportation projects that have multiple
20 funding sources.

- 1 d. A baseline schedule be adopted and published at least 2 years in advance for all AMHS
2 routes, and provide service commensurate with community size and usage.
- 3 e. Full, consistent and predictable funding for maintenance and operation of the AMHS.
- 4 f. DOT partner with communities to maximize marketing efforts and revenue potential
5 for the AMHS.
- 6 g. The Legislature reinstate the AMHS Trust Fund.
- 7 h. The AMHS be included on an equitable basis with other state transportation systems,
8 including the regional transportation plans.
- 9 i. The use of state supported public and/or private feeder ferries as improvements to ferry
10 service.
- 11 j. Alaska shipyards, maintenance, and training services are used whenever possible.

13 **F. STATE POLICIES AFFECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

15 **1. Building Officials:**

- 16 a. The League supports continuation of state policy to not require building officials or
17 plan reviewers to be registered architects or engineers.
- 18 b. The League supports the rights of local communities that have statutory deferral to
19 enforce the state building codes without interference by state officials. If an error occurs
20 by a local government official, the state may then overrule the decision.

1 **2. Safety Code Adoption:**

2 The League urges municipal representation on any review panel for adoption of codes.

3
4 **3. Payment & Performance Bonds for Public Works Projects:**

5 The League supports an amendment to AS 36.25.010 providing for an inflationary increase
6 up to \$250,000 in the contract limit for requiring payment and performance bonds of
7 contractors for public buildings or public works projects.

8
9 **G. UTILITY REGULATION**

10
11 **1. Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA) Reauthorization:**

12 RCA provides an important safeguard for Alaska utilities and their customers and should
13 be reauthorized. However there should be a series of statutory changes and performance
14 measurements that address timely case clearance and ensure the agency is operating in an
15 effective and efficient manner.

16
17 **2. Exemption of Municipal Utilities from RCA:**

18 The League supports statutory exemptions that allow municipal utilities to operate in the
19 best interest of the consumer without regulation by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska
20 (RCA).

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3. Solid Waste Collection and Disposal:

The League supports continued state regulation of solid waste collection and disposal. The lack of competition in this utility could increase costs to consumers, unless a municipality opts to take over solid waste collection and disposal regulations.

H. FUNDING ASSISTANCE FOR UTILITIES

1. Sustainable Water and Sewer Funding:

The League urges the state to develop and implement a mechanism to create a fund that will result in a long-term sustainable state-funded water and sewer program.

1. Municipal Matching Grant Program:

The League strongly supports continuation of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation’s Municipal Matching Grant Program which provides at least 50 60 percent of the cost of sewage systems, auxiliary equipment, solid waste facilities, and water systems.

2. Village Safe Water Program:

1 The League strongly supports continuation of the Village Safe Water Program of the Alaska
2 Department of Environmental Conservation. The League also strongly supports the
3 funding of the Remote Maintenance Worker Program through the State of Alaska
4 Department of Environmental Conservation. The League supports state technical and
5 financial assistance to rural communities to improve the basic sanitation facilities. The
6 League supports an appropriation level to meet the needs of rural Alaskan communities
7 throughout the state.

9 **3. Revolving Loan Programs:**

10 The League strongly supports continuation of revolving loan programs such as the
11 Drinking Water Fund and the Clean Water Fund.

13 **I. ENERGY**

14
15 A statewide energy plan to provide reliable, sustainable, available, and affordable energy is
16 critical to the citizens of Alaska and to the promotion of economic development opportunities.

17 Therefore, the League recommends that the state:

19 **1. Support the findings and action recommendations of the Rural Energy Action**

20 **Council which include:**

- 1 • Power Cost Equalization (PCE) Program Funding: Full funding of the PCE
- 2 Endowment through joint congressional and state appropriations.
- 3 • Bulk Storage Operations and Maintenance
- 4 • Bulk Fuel Upgrade Projects
- 5 • Bulk Fuel Cooperatives
- 6 • High Cost of Bulk Fuel in Rural Alaska
- 7 • Diesel Powerhouse Efficiency Improvements
- 8 • Alternative Energy
- 9 • Energy Conservation and Building Weatherization Program
- 10 • Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- 11 • Energy Funding for School Districts
- 12 • Rural Energy Centers

14 **2. Provide Funding:**

- 15 a. Provide funding for construction, refurbishment and replacement of electric power
- 16 infrastructure.
- 17 b. Provide funding for exploration and development of renewable energy sources such as
- 18 wind, hydro, solar, geothermal, tidal, biomass and wave.
- 19 c. Provide funding for immediate or short-term programs designed to address current
- 20 energy requirements while long-term energy solutions are developed.

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3. Partnerships:

Work in partnership with local communities to enhance knowledge and expertise to move important energy projects forward.

4. Railbelt Energy Fund:

Use the Alaska Railbelt Energy Fund to pay for energy projects along the “rail belt” corridor of the state.

5. Interties:

Support the expansion of electrical utilities between communities through construction of interties, and upgrades to decrease line loss and increase efficiency.

6. Natural Gas:

The League supports development of plans or programs to bring the state’s natural gas resources to as many local communities as possible.

7. Fuel Costs:

1 The Governor and Legislature are urged to develop a program which uses some of the
2 State of Alaska owned oil to provide low cost fuel to Alaskan homes, businesses and
3 industry.

4 5 **J. SOLID WASTE COLLECTION, DISPOSAL, & LANDFILLS**

6 7 **1. Solid Waste Reduction Programs:**

8 The League supports funding and financial incentives for recycling and other regulatory
9 programs to reduce solid waste in local landfills in order to extend their useful life.

10 11 **2. Cleaning up our Communities:**

12 a. The League supports the funding for clean-up of junk/abandoned vehicles through the
13 motor vehicle registration fee and the fuel tax. The League also supports legislation that
14 will ease notice requirements in Title 28 for disposing of abandoned vehicles which are
15 more appropriately defined as scrap metal. These vehicles have no Vehicle
16 Identification Number (VIN) or other identifying marks.

17 b. The League supports amendments to AS 30.090.100 to authorize municipalities to use
18 the same process for the disposal of derelict vessels.

19 20 **3. Public Landfills:**

1 The League supports the concept of state-established public landfill sites, where no
2 alternate sites exist to serve local and regional needs of small communities, which are
3 currently bearing a considerable burden by complying with federal and state
4 environmental regulations.

6 **K. TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND COMPUTING**

8 **1. Alaska Rural Communications System (ARCS):**

9 The League strongly supports continued funding for ARCS and public broadcasting as a
10 critical link for emergency communications for communities across Alaska.

12 **2. Bridging the Digital Divide:**

13 The League supports efforts to ensure affordable, high-speed internet access statewide.
14 Especially in consideration of Alaska's many physically remote communities, reliable,
15 high-speed internet access is critical to economic development, commerce, education, and
16 training.

18 **3. State Oversight of Emergency Communications:**

19 The League supports stronger state involvement to provide oversight and enforcement of
20 safe operations of local radio communications, such as VHF band.