ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2015-01

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE REINSTATEMENT OF A FULL $60 MILLION INTO THE REVENUE SHARING FUND ON A YEARLY BASIS WITH A ONE-YEAR APPROPRIATION OF $8 MILLION TO THE FUND WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE PRIOR TO JUNE 30, 2015

WHEREAS, all of Alaska’s boroughs and cities are appreciative to the Governor and the Legislature for the continuation of the Revenue Sharing program; and

WHEREAS, since 2008, municipalities have received a total of $60 million per year to be divided among all boroughs, cities and unorganized communities in the State; and

WHEREAS, this money is a small share of the resource funding that is provided to the State; and

WHEREAS, $60 million is also a small part of the total state-wide budget for the year; and

WHEREAS, municipalities are political subdivisions of the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, boroughs and cities can only raise their own money through increased taxes and/or fees; and

WHEREAS, in the past 2014 Legislative Session, the amount deposited into the Revenue Sharing fund dropped to $52 million; and

WHEREAS, the larger municipalities use these funds to keep taxes as low as possible; and

WHEREAS, the smaller municipalities use these funds to provide basic services, such as snow removal, public building maintenance, harbor upkeep, fuel and insurance.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests the Alaska State Legislature to reinstate the amount of $60 million on an annual basis into the Revenue Sharing Fund and also that the Alaska State Legislature appropriate an additional $8 million to the fund with an effective date prior to June 30, 2015.
PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 21st day of November, 2014.

Signed: [Signature]
Linda Murphy, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: [Signature]
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League
ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2015-02

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE STATE OF ALASKA CONTINUE TO HONOR THEIR COMMITMENT WITH NON-STATE PERS EMPLOYERS WHICH CAPS THEIR PAST AND PRESENT SERVICE COSTS AT 22% OF SALARY; AND THAT THE STATE CONTINUE TO WORK WITH AML TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE ONEROUS TERMINATION STUDY AND BELOW THE FLOOR COSTS

WHEREAS, through 2008 legislation, SB 125, municipalities were committed to paying a salary rate cap of 22% of salary, to include current service costs and a portion of the unfunded PERS liability; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League was a major player in the passage of HB 385, which was the Governor's proposal to deposit $3 billion into the PERS/TRS fund; and

WHEREAS, municipalities knew full well that acceptance of HB 385 would mean municipalities would pay an additional $2.5 billion due to the change of the amortization period and the extension of nine years; and

WHEREAS, the ARM Board, as of September 2014, voted to approve 2016 contribution rates of 27.19% for PERS, down from 31.90% for 2015; and

WHEREAS, municipalities will be realizing an 86% total cost increase while the state if saving $1.4 billion in “on-behalf” PERS contributions; and

WHEREAS, municipalities additionally must pay termination costs of a department, group or classification of employees that terminates participation under AS 39.35.625 to include the cost of a study and the payment of the past service cost, into the plan each payroll period until the past service liability of the plan is extinguished (approximately 25 years); and

WHEREAS, municipalities are also obligated to pay if their salary floor drops below the 2008 floor (the amount of their salary base when SB 125 was passed); and

WHEREAS, with increasing costs to municipalities, reduced funding from the State and the Federal government, municipalities find themselves in a difficult position of not being able to reduce their workforce, as it will trigger a termination study and/or drop the municipality below the 2008 floor; and

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WHEREAS, this hampers small municipalities the most, as they have only one person that may belong to a “department, group or classification;” and

WHEREAS, the State charges 12% interest on unpaid termination costs or below the floor costs, leaving many small communities facing bills that they will never be able to pay.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests that the State honor their commitment to non-state PERS employers which caps their past and present service costs at 22% of salary; and that the State continue to work with AML to find a solution to the onerous termination study and below the floor costs.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 21st day of November, 2014.

Signed: [Signature]
Linda Murphy, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: [Signature]
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League
ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2015-03

A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATURE FUND THE SENIOR CITIZEN’S/DISABLED VETERAN’S PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION AS REQUIRED IN AS 29.45.030(g) OR REPEAL THE MANDATE, EXCLUDING THE VALUE FROM THE DETERMINATION UNDER AS 14.17.510, AND GIVE CONTROL TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR THOSE DECISIONS

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, the State of Alaska imposed a mandate that required all municipalities that levy a property tax, to exempt the first $150,000 value of primary homes belonging to seniors and disabled vets, from that property tax; and

WHEREAS, property tax exemptions raise the property tax liability to those individuals who do not receive the benefits of those exemptions; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska also passed law in statute that requires the State to reimburse municipalities for those exemptions; and

WHEREAS, not long after passage, the State of Alaska felt they could no longer reimburse municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska, however, did not relax the mandate requiring municipalities to continue to exempt; and

WHEREAS, we feel that municipalities know best what their financial situation is; and

WHEREAS, municipalities are better equipped to dictate exemptions that full under their purview; and

WHEREAS, municipalities can write their own ordinances about whom they exempt and how much; and

WHEREAS, while Revenue Sharing provided to 164 municipalities has decreased to $52 million per year, the Senior Citizen’s/Disabled Veteran’s Property Tax exemption is now costing the 18 municipalities that levy a property tax, a total of over $59 million per year; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests that the Alaska State Legislature fund the Senior Citizen’s/Disabled Veteran’s Property Tax exemption as required in AS 29.45.030(g) or repeal the mandate, excluding the value
from the determination under AS 14.17.510, and give control to local governments for those decisions.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 21st day of November, 2014.

Signed: [Signature]
Linda Murphy, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: [Signature]
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League
ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2015-04

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE STATE’S EFFORT TO BUILD A LARGE DIAMETER GAS PIPELINE TO TIDEWATER FOR THE PURPOSE OF LARGE SCALE GAS EXPORTS AND THE DISPERSION OF LOW COST ENERGY THROUGHOUT THE STATE

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League is grateful for the long hours Legislators have put into planning a gas pipeline; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League would like to encourage the Legislature to proactively determine how to best distribute energy outside the pipeline corridor to as many Alaskans, as possible; and

WHEREAS, SB 138 requires the Alaska Energy Authority to consult with the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, and the Department of Revenue to create and implement a plan for developing infrastructure to deliver more affordable energy to areas of the state that are not expected to have direct access to a North Slope natural gas pipeline; and

WHEREAS, we request that the Alaska State Legislature be prepared to make necessary infrastructure investments early in the project to ensure appropriate ports, networks, transportation hubs, and/or distribution systems are in place; and

WHEREAS, an Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline must be designed and constructed in a manner that will ensure maximum distribution of energy resources and benefits to all Alaskan communities.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the State’s effort to build a large diameter gas pipeline to tidewater for the purpose of large scale gas exports and the dispersion of low cost energy throughout the state.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 21st day of November, 2014.
Signed: Linda Murphy, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League
ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2015-05

A RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING AN AMENDMENT TO AS 35.30.010 PROVIDING FOR STRONGER AUTHORITY BY LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES FOR PUBLIC PROJECTS

WHEREAS, Alaska Statute 35.30.010 – Review and Approval by Local Planning Authorities, requires the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to obtain approval from local planning authorities before commencing construction of a public project, such as a highway improvement; and

WHEREAS, “before commencing construction” of a public project, allows the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to advance a public project without local planning authority until the project plan is final and ready for construction, which is at a point of no return for the department and gives little meaning to the statute; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities needs to obtain local planning review and approval for public projects before the final design or alternative is approved and accepted by the department, to meet the intent of the state.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League recommends an amendment to AS 35.30.010 providing for stronger authority by local planning authorities, by deleting, “before commencing construction” and by inserting, “before plans are approved by the department and an approved alternative is accepted by the department.”

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 21st day of November, 2014.

Signed:  

Linda Murphy, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest:  

Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League

Member of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties
ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2015-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION (IJC) INVOLVEMENT IN THE ALASKA AND BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSBOUNDARY REGION

WHEREAS, the transboundary rivers of Northwest British Columbia and Southeast Alaska have tremendous unique economic, ecological, cultural and recreational value; and

WHEREAS, pristine waters and intact habitats make protecting productive and healthy wild salmon populations throughout these transboundary river systems a priority; and

WHEREAS, commercial mining in British Columbia (BC) is experiencing unprecedented expansion within the headwaters of the Taku, Stikine and Unuk rivers; and

WHEREAS, proposed mines include Tulsequah Chief in the Taku watershed; Galore Creek, Red Christ and Schaft Creek in the Stikine watershed; and the KerrSulphuretsMitchell (KSM) project in the headwaters of the Unuk River; and

WHEREAS, large-scale mining and energy development could have significant adverse effects on the environment and fisheries within the transboundary region; and

WHEREAS, an unprecedented level of water treatment and inadequate tailings containments could pose the threat of acid mine drainage for centuries, if not in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, federal, provincial, environmental assessment processes should address the cumulative impacts of industrial development; and

WHEREAS, commercial fishermen, subsistence and recreational users, elected leaders, local communities and Native tribes on both sides of the Alaska/Canadian border have raised concerns about the pace and scope of the proposed industrial development in the headwaters of transboundary river systems and the potential for harm to water quality, fish and wildlife, and the socioeconomic sustainability of local communities within the region; and

WHEREAS, the Boundary Waters Treaty states, “waters flowing across the boundary shall not be polluted on either side to the injury of health or property on the other” and

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provides a mechanism to address transboundary river concerns known as the International Joint Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League strongly urges the United States government to work with the government of Canada to refer the issue of transboundary development in the Alaska and British Columbia region to the International Joint Commission and to utilize any and all powers under the Boundary Waters Treaty to ensure that Alaska resources are not harmed by upstream development in BC; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the concerns of affected local communities, individuals and user groups downstream from these projects must be integral to transboundary watershed development decision making and further urge greater opportunity for these voices to be heard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that affected communities and governments be consulted with and represented in policy discussions related to impacts to these watersheds.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 21st day of November, 2014.

Signed: [Signature]
Linda Murphy, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: [Signature]
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League