

# 2013



# POLICY STATEMENT

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## INDEX

<b>PART I – Revenue and Finance</b> .....	Page 1
A. Revenue Sharing, Funding for Education, Grants and Fiscal Planning...	Page 1
B. Administration of Municipal Grants and Entitlements.....	Page 1
C. Local Taxes.....	Page 2
D. Public Employees’ Retirement and Benefits.....	Page 2
E. State/Local Financial Policies and Relations.....	Page 3
<b>PART II – Education, Local Government and Public Services</b> .....	Page 4
A. Basic Education Support.....	Page 4
B. Assembly/Council/School Board Authority.....	Page 5
C. State Policies affecting local communities.....	Page 5
D. Federal Policies Affecting Education.....	Page 7
<b>Local Government</b> .....	Page 7
A. Preserve Local Autonomy.....	Page 7
B. Elections and Reapportionment.....	Page 7
C. Public Employees’ Labor Relations.....	Page 8
D. Tribal Council/Local Government Relations.....	Page 8
E. Formation and Alteration of Municipalities.....	Page 8
F. Community Development.....	Page 8
G. Contracting State Services.....	Page 9
H. State Policies Affecting Local Communities.....	Page 9
<b>Public Services</b> .....	Page 9
A. State Public Safety Responsibility.....	Page 9
B. Health.....	Page 13
C. Liability Issues.....	Page 13
D. State Funded Social Programs.....	Page 14
E. Alaska Temporary Assistance Program.....	Page 14
<b>PART III – Land Use, Resources and Economic Development</b> .....	Page 15
A. Local Options.....	Page 15
B. Land Selection.....	Page 15
C. State Land Management.....	Page 15
D. Coastal Zone Management.....	Page 15
E. Watersheds.....	Page 16
F. Wetlands.....	Page 16
G. Land Sales and Subdivisions.....	Page 16
H. Geographic Information Systems.....	Page 16
I. State Policies Affecting Land Use.....	Page 16
J. Global Climate Change.....	Page 17
<b>Resources and Economic Development</b> .....	Page 17
A. Authority and Incentives.....	Page 17
B. Impact.....	Page 17
C. State Policies Affecting Local Communities.....	Page 18
<b>PART IV – Public Works and Infrastructure</b> .....	Page 22
A. State Policies Affecting Local Communities.....	Page 22
B. Transportation.....	Page 22
C. Utilities.....	Page 24
D. Energy.....	Page 24
E. Solid Waste Collection, Disposal and Landfills.....	Page 25
F. Telecommunications and Computing.....	Page 25

## PART I

### REVENUE AND FINANCE

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

#### A. Revenue Sharing, Funding for Education, Grants and Fiscal Planning

##### 1. State Revenue Sharing

a. Sustainable Revenue Sharing: The State of Alaska is urged to adopt a sustainable revenue sharing program by annually appropriating 6% of natural resource revenues, with no cap, to municipalities; with a base amount of \$250,000 to all boroughs, \$75,000 to all cities, and \$25,000 to unincorporated communities, with the remainder to be allocated on a per capita basis. The sharing of state revenues is consistent with the Owner State concept, intergovernmental cooperation, and constitutional provisions, which provide for natural resource ownership by all the people of the state of Alaska. Delivery of services at the local level is part of the annual state responsibility to citizen/owners for the betterment of the state of Alaska. Fish tax, which has a revenue sharing program is excluded from this program. The League opposes linking community revenue sharing with PERS/TRS, education funding, PILT payments and payments of unfunded mandates.

b. Return of locally-generated state revenues: Locally generated revenues should be shared by the state. Money to be returned to local governments and taxpayers should include:

- Tobacco taxes;
- Alcohol taxes;
- Marine fuel taxes
- Motor vehicle registration fees and fuel taxes; and
- State fisheries business and fisheries land taxes.

c. State payment in lieu of taxes (PILT): A state PILT, similar to the federal PILT program should be established to reduce local taxpayer subsidization of state lands, state parks, and facilities.

##### 2. State funding for education

a. Full forward funding for education: The League supports full forward funding of the education foundation program, school debt reimbursement, and construction. (See Part II, Education, for a full discussion of AML's position).

##### 3. Municipal Capital Matching Grants and Fiscal Planning

a. The League supports:

- Full funding for the municipal capital matching grant program;
- Funding for state and municipal facilities and infrastructure on a timely and consistent basis; and
- Ongoing funding for deferred maintenance.

#### B. Administration of Municipal Grants and Entitlements

##### 1. Regulation of Grants and Entitlements

a. The League supports legislation action for:

- Standardized grant and entitlement programs;
- Reduction of administrative fees;
- Grantee retention of interest earned on grant funds.

**2. *Maintaining the integrity of objective project and program ranking processes***

a. The League supports maintaining the integrity of objective state grant ranking processes, developed in cooperation with the Legislature, municipalities and school districts. Such objective ranking processes include capital project matching grants, school construction grants, and water and sewer construction grants. Rather than substitute projects at the legislative level, the League supports revision of the prioritization criteria, as appropriate, to best reflect the needs of Alaskans.

**C. Local Taxes**

**1. *Tax Levying Authority***

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

**2. *Sales and Property Taxes***

a. The League supports municipal control over sales and property taxes.

b. States sales taxes, or statewide mandated sales tax exemptions, are strongly discouraged.

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

a. The League supports equitable taxation based on the market value of property as the basis of property tax. Discriminatory tax rates and classifications are discouraged.

**4. *Real Estate Sales Disclosure***

a. The League supports mandatory reporting of real estate transfers to assure more equitable property assessments.

**5. *State mandated local senior citizen/disabled veteran tax exemption***

a. 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), which reads, "The State shall reimburse a city or borough for real property tax revenues lost."

**6. *Legislation definition of tax exemption due to charitable purposes***

a. The League supports enactment of a narrower statutory definition of the "charitable purposes" real property tax exemption.

**7. *Property tax revenue cap amendments***

a. The League recommends that the Alaska state legislation delete the numerical limits on tax revenues in AS 29.45.090(b) 1 and 2 and (c) 1 and 2.

**D. Public Employees' Retirement and Benefits**

**1. *Funding of PERS/TRS***

a. The League recognizes the work of the Alaska State Legislature and the administration to address the PERS/TRS crisis. The League is committed to the PERS/TRS resolution provided by Senate Bill 125, adopted in 2008.

b. Further, the League:

- Supports sustaining the PERS salary base;
- Supports removing unintended termination language in the statutes;
- Supports public employee defined benefit retirees to be rehired as defined contribution employees;
- Opposes any increases in benefits without an actual analysis; and
- Supports inclusion of political subdivisions in state group health insurance.

## **E. State/Local Financial Policies and Relations**

### **1. North Slope Natural Gas Pipeline**

a. The League strongly endorses the construction of an all Alaskan natural gas pipeline from the north slope to tidewater, including regional spurs and petrochemical development and a PILT program or other guaranteed mechanism for municipalities to levy local taxes.

b. The League supports consideration of all routes and immediate construction of an economically sustainable in-state natural gas line to provide economic driver and increased revenues to the state, reliable low-cost energy relief for Alaskan communities, and inducement for business and employment enterprises.

### **2. The League supports a requirement for regional energy cost stabilization and equalization to decrease pressure on state budget expenses.**

### **3. State unfunded mandates on local taxpayers**

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

### **4. Municipalities support negotiated and funded public service transfers**

a. The League supports the negotiation of service responsibility transfers from the state to municipalities, provided the state enters into good faith negotiations to identify and transfer appropriate services, which may more effectively be provided on the local level, and ensure adequate, stable resources and timely payment in the future to implement these services. Municipalities should also be allowed to bid on provisions of state services.

### **5. Tort reform**

a. The League supports continued tort reform that minimizes the financial exposure of municipalities.

### **6. Liens on property for delinquent municipal payments**

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

### **7. Tax Caps**

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

### **8. Utility fees**

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

### **9. Coastal Zone Management**

a. The League urges the Governor and the Legislature to adopt an Alaska Coastal Zone Management Program as suggested in Part III of the Land Use, Resources and Economic Development section of the Policy Statement.

## PART II

### EDUCATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES

#### EDUCATION

The goal is to ensure the level of state support required by the Alaska Constitution, so that all residents of Alaska have access to high-quality educational opportunities.

##### A. Basic Education Support

###### **1. Alaska's constitutional mandate regarding education**

a. Education is a state responsibility, funding for education shall not be a consideration when comparing state aid to municipalities with the budget for state operations.

b. In *MacCauley v. Hildebrand* (1971), the Alaska Supreme Court states: *The constitutional mandate for pervasive state authority in the field of education, could not be clearer. First, the language is mandatory, not permissive. Second, the section not only requires that the Legislature "establish" a school system, but also gives to that body the continuing obligation to "maintain" the system. Finally, the provision is unqualified; no other unit of government shares responsibility or authority.* The Alaska Supreme Court reaffirmed this position in subsequent rulings

###### **2. State education funding formula**

a. The League urges the Governor and Legislature to continually fully fund the education funding formula and monitor the allocation of funds to promote equity in educational opportunities across the state, emphasizing cost differentials and the effects of inflation. The state should fully fund the basic needs of all school districts.

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

###### **3. Early funding for education**

a. The League urges the Legislature to continue to forward funding so that school districts know the amount of funding available prior to the deadline for submission of school budgets.

###### **4. Basic education and adequacy standards**

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

b. The necessary components of an adequate education are:

- A locally adopted curricula that meet or exceed Alaska state standards;
- Qualified educators who are provided the time and support for professional development;
- A safe and healthy environment, in well-maintained facilities that are capable of supporting appropriate technology for programs;
- Facilities:
  1. Adequate construction and condition per Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) standards, including lighting and ventilation.
- Operations and Maintenance: Adequate funding to:
  1. Provide required heat, light, etc. with costs adjusted regionally;

2. Perform required maintenance and replacement;
3. Provide student transportation in all districts including REAAs;
4. Utilize distance education to meet curriculum needs of all students.

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

**5. Grants for school construction and maintenance programs**

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

**6. School performance**

a. AML supports:

- Evaluative tools for the purpose of making communities aware of their school performance. The tools should include analysis and drop-out rates for students each year. The purpose of evaluative tools is not to close down schools, but to help communities, families, school staff and students become aware of how well students are learning in their school;
- Continued funding for school improvement plans;
- Develop and implement funding to prepare teachers to teach in rural communities; and
- Funding for programs, including scholarships or educational loan forgiveness that encourages Alaskans to teach in Alaska.

**7. Bonded indebtedness for school construction and major maintenance**

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

**8. Local autonomy to provide funding**

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

**9. Block grants**

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

**B. Assembly/Council/School Board Authority**

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

**C. State policies affecting local communities**

**1. Charter schools**

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

**2. Early childhood education**

a. The League recognizes the importance of early childhood education and developmental programs for all children from birth through age eight. The League encourages the Legislature to establish statewide Early Childhood Program standards to promote quality childcare to include a safe, healthy, enriching environment and trained, professional staff with personal background checks that go beyond current childcare licensing requirements.

b. The League urges the Legislature to fund public preschool and early childhood programs as a component of state education program funding.

**3. Distance delivery programs and other alternatives**

a. The League supports distance delivery programs to meet specific educational needs of various student populations. The League recognizes distance delivery opportunities as one of the best alternatives for certain student populations, particularly in remote areas. The state must compensate for any federal funding reductions to distance delivery costs including e-rates.

**4. University of Alaska**

a. 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;
- Coordinate with K-12 schools to address unique local needs in development of their teacher education programs; and
- Develop entrepreneurial programs.

**5. Technical and vocational education**

a. The League understands the critical need for and fully supports funding for technical and vocational education programs, including dedicated funding for grades 7-12, to meet future job opportunities for Alaska's students. The League urges the state to prepare for and fund these critical programs.

**6. Consolidation**

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

**7. Libraries**

a. The League supports full funding of AS 14.56.300, Library Assistance Grant Program.

**8. Loans and scholarships**

a. The League supports state student educational loans and scholarships. The League further supports a mandated program for high school students that inform students that plan to apply for a student loan or scholarship, of the associated responsibilities and consequences prior to award of any loan or scholarship.



## **D. Federal policies affecting education**

### **1. NCLB flexibility**

a. The League supports DEED's plan for developing a replacement act or future federal policy for "No Child Left Behind," that addresses the needs of Alaska's children.

### **2. Support of School nutritional programs**

a. The League recognizes the need for school nutrition programs including breakfast and lunch, to ensure students are ready to learn, including use of federal and state funds and local community groups to meet these nutritional needs.

b. The League encourages the use of Alaskan food sources in school nutritional programs.

## **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**

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

#### **2. Lobbying**

a. The League supports the continued exemption of municipal officials and employees from the lobbying reporting of Alaska state statutes.

#### **3. State-wide ballot initiatives**

a. The League opposes restrictions on municipality's involvement in state-wide ballot initiatives.

#### **4. Anti-trust laws**

a. The League supports legislation at the state level placing municipalities in an equal position with state governments with respect to federal antitrust laws.

#### **5. Local construction**

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

### **B. Elections and Reapportionment**

#### **1. Local elections**

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

#### **2. Amendment of National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter)**

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

#### **3. Help America Vote Act (HAVA)**

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

## **C. Public Employees Labor Relations**

### **1. Alaska Public Employees Labor Relations Act**

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

### **2. Binding arbitration**

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

## **D. Tribal council/local government relations**

### **1. Rural governance**

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

### **2. Partnerships**

a. The League encourages municipalities to work cooperatively with their local tribes.

### **3. Tribal governments**

a. The League supports expanding AS 21.76 to include Native government entities and not-for-profits providing quasi-governmental services.

## **E. Formation and alteration of municipalities**

### **1. Local government structure in the unorganized borough**

a. The League urges the Legislature to take a more active role as the Assembly of the Unorganized Borough, as mandated by the Alaska constitution.

### **2. New incorporation or annexation**

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

### **3. Entitlement lands**

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

## **F. Community development**

a. The state has a duty under Article 10, Section 14 of the Alaska state constitution to advise and assist local governments. Many communities are on the verge of dissolution and failure of their local government. It is critical that the state assist communities with either sustaining municipalities or the orderly dissolution of failing municipalities. Adequate funding must be provided to the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Division of Community and Rural Affairs to provide this advice and their services.

### **1. Local government service center**

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

### **2. Local planning**

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

**3. Sustainability programs**

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

**G. Contracting state services**

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

**H. State policies affecting local communities**

**1. Open meetings act**

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

**2. Recorder's officer**

- a. 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.

**3. Financial disclosure reporting**

- a. The League supports returning to the 2007 APOC Financial Disclosure and Conflict of Interest forms for local governments.

**4. Workers' compensation fee schedule**

- a. The League supports setting a reasonable fixed fee schedule for allowable medical fees in workers' compensation claims.

**PUBLIC SERVICES**

**The goal is to ensure adequate state support for public safety, health, emergency medical services, fire and life safety, and social programs for the welfare of all Alaskans.**

**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. Village Public Safety and Village Police Officers:

- 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.
- There is a critical need for mandatory certification, training, and background verification for Village Police Officers' (VPOs) training to be certified and recognized by the state of Alaska.

- c. Alaska Police Standards Certification Tiers

- The League supports authorizing the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) by statute, to create tiers of peace officers, as well as task APSC with creating the corresponding training standards and minimum qualifications for officers. Currently, law enforcement across the state spans a spectrum that ranges from highly-skilled to barely-skilled personnel and departments. Creating tiers will improve standards and structure to current law enforcement programs. A tiered program will codify hiring and training standards across the state and improve public safety.

- d. Criminal justice system review:
  - The League urges the legislature to fund 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.
- e. Fire and life safety
  - Firefighting equipment: The League supports continued state and federal support for acquisition of replacement of aging firefighting equipment and for training on the operation of the equipment throughout the state, including fire service areas.
  - Local control of minimum fire staffing: The League supports and encourages cooperative agreements between municipalities, neighboring departments and communities, in order to meet the minimum staffing requirements set out by national standards.
  - Fire standards council: The League supports continued funding for the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Prevention, Office of Rural Fire Protection. This office provides the maintenance and continuing education for participants in the successful Project Code Red program.
- f. 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.
- g. Hazard mitigation and fuel management:
  - The League advocates legislation supporting funding by communities in the development of hazard mitigation and urban wild land fuel management programs.

## **2. *Emergency communications***

- a. Statewide Interoperable Governance Body (SIGB):
  - The League supports the creation of the Statewide Interoperable Governance Body (SIGB) whose mission would be to develop recommendations for policy and guidelines, identify technology and standards, and coordinate intergovernmental resources to facilitate statewide interoperability, with emphasis on public safety for the state of Alaska.
- b. E-911 emergency dispatch services:
  - For statewide E-911 service, ensure that all residents and visitors within the State of Alaska have access to E-911. Basic E-911 service is not available to all communities in the state of Alaska, due primarily to a lack of designated Primary Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).
  - The League supports amending current Alaska statutes so that the E-911 surcharge is equitable for all devices and modes capable of calling E-911 and provides a mechanism for sufficient funding to accommodate the changing requirements of E-911 public safety answering points. Current E-911 technology in the state is not compatible with Next Generation calling services used by the public, including Voice Over Internet Protocol, Short Messaging Service, Instant Messaging, and Telematics.
  - The League supports amending the current Alaska statutes so that the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA) has clear authority for the local exchange carrier provision of E-911 dispatch calling services and develops a statewide organization with local representation and sufficient authority to administer the needs of a statewide E-911 system. Many issues related to the

effectiveness of E-911 emergency calling must be resolved at a statewide level. The state of Alaska does not have an effective mechanism for administering the complex operational and technical issues related to E-911.

- c. Development of a statewide Integrated Emergency Radio Communications System:
- The League supports the continued development and implementation of the Alaska's Land Mobile Radio System (ALMR) to ensure good, stable communications during disasters. However, the League opposes passing on the operations and maintenance costs to local jurisdictions. Passing these costs on to local governments will drastically reduce the number of participants on this system, further reducing statewide interoperable communications.

### **3. State emergency mutual aid plan**

- a. The League urges the state to develop a statewide emergency mutual aid plan for municipalities across jurisdictions with a clear understanding of liabilities to all parties.

### **4. Youth**

a. Juvenile crime issues: The League recognizes that juvenile crime continues to be a serious problem in Alaska. The nature of juvenile crime is becoming more violent and the cost due to vandalism is increasing. The League recommends that juvenile laws be equitably enforced. While accountability and consequence should be a part of our juvenile system, without effective follow-through with case-managed social services and rehabilitation programs, the system will continue to fail our youth. Confidentiality should be balanced between the public's right to know and the juvenile offenders' best interests.

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

c. Juvenile detention and correction costs: The League supports a state/local process to develop consistent policies for state/local roles in providing police, jail, and prosecution services. Juvenile detention and correctional programs require different facilities. The League supports the construction and operation of these facilities in local communities to minimize transportation costs and maintain community and family involvement.

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

e. Preventive programs: The League supports preventive programs for youth and families.

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

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

### **5. Jails and correction facilities**

a. Community jail funding: The League supports legislation that fully funds community jails. Community jails serve all Alaskans and provide a great savings to the state by reducing inter-state prisoner transportation costs. Municipalities should not pick up the cost for a state responsibility. The League supports a balanced and equitable formula to fund all correctional facilities in the state.

b. New jail space: Overcrowding in jails is a serious problem and new jail space is needed. Alaska could gain through economic multiplier effects by housing Alaskan

prisoners in state. The League recommends that additional funding for new jail space and operations be appropriated. Public safety for all Alaskans is critically affected by the availability of jails. The cost of building and operating jails is beyond the financial abilities of local municipalities.

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

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

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

f. Corrections officer training: The League urges the state to increase corrections officer training availability to ensure timely receipt of this training for newly hired community jail corrections officers.

## **6. Courts**

a. Prosecution costs: The League recommends full funding for the Department of Law so that criminals are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

b. Criminal defense costs: The League recommends the state provide full financial support for the Public Defender Agency and the Office of Public Advocacy, so that all citizens may receive the full benefit of their state and federal constitutional rights.

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

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

e. Research on therapeutic courts: The League supports researching the cost and effectiveness of the therapeutic court program throughout the state.

## **7. Workers' Compensation for emergency service personnel:**

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

## **8. Training**

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

## **9. Violence prevention**

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

## **B. Health**

### **1. Statewide comprehensive health planning and negotiation of governmental roles**

a. 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**

a. The League supports full funding of public health nursing.

### **3. Health care costs**

a. 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.

### **4. Hospital and health facility funding**

a. The League supports state assistance for hospital and health facility construction, maintenance and operating costs.

### **5. Emergency medical services (EMS)**

a. The League supports the funding and continuation of the Governor's Alaska Council on Emergency Medical Services (ACEMS) under the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services.

b. The League supports the full funding and staffing of the Office of Injury Prevention and Emergency Medical Services (IPEMS) office.

c. The League supports continued state support for acquisition of EMS equipment through the Code Blue program. This program has provided funding to agencies for essential equipment that would otherwise be unable to purchase the equipment themselves.

d. The League supports the continued full funding of the EMS grants to regions to enable the regional offices to continue their efforts to support the local EMS and fire agencies in their region.

e. The League supports the continued funding to continue the upgrade of the EMS legacy system of repeaters that are an essential communications component for the state of Alaska and still relied upon by emergency responders.

f. The League supports funding and legislation for Trauma System development for the state of Alaska.

### **6. Funding for distance delivery of education for nurses and nursing assistants**

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

### **7. Telemedicine**

a. The League supports the expansion of telemedicine services throughout Alaska.

### **8. Electronic medical records**

a. The League supports and encourages implementation of electronic medical record interconnectivity between health care providers.

## **C. Liability issues**

**1. Liability for failure to take an incapacitated person into custody**

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

**2. Liability for emergency response outside municipal boundaries**

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

**3. Liability of health clinics and hospitals for actions of non-employees**

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

**4. Liability for corrections community service workers**

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

**5. Liability for jail/prison operation**

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

**6. Municipal liability limitations**

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

**D. State funded social programs**

a. The League urges the state to adequately fund essential social programs:

- Child protection
- Substance abuse
- Domestic and sexual abuse
- Suicide prevention
- Fetal alcohol effect/fetal alcohol syndrome
- Mental health

**E. Alaska temporary assistance program**

**1. Adequate funding and job opportunities**

a. The League urges the state to match federal funding dollar-for-dollar and enforce the provisions under the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program.

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

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

**2. Safety net**

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

**3. Focus**

a. The League urges the state to maintain focus of the Welfare to Work program on finding and creating jobs, providing supportive services, protecting the welfare of children, and keeping people employed.



## PART III

### LAND USE, RESOURCES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### LAND USE

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

##### A. Local Options

###### **1. *Planning, zoning and land use***

a. The League believes that local planning and zoning laws, review processes, and land use and subdivision regulations apply to all state land use actions, to allow for comprehensive local control of community development.

##### B. Land selection

###### **1. *Easements, conveyance and land use***

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

###### **2. *Conveyance and land use***

a. The League urges cooperative efforts to resolve conveyance issues of lands not yet jointly agreed upon by municipal, state, and federal government on lands affected by the municipal land selection process.

b. The state and federal government and their agencies have the legal responsibility for remediating hazardous sites, including legacy wells, abandoned mine sites and previously undisclosed hazardous material at active and formerly used defense sites. The clean-up effort should meet EPA and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) standards and standards acceptable to the community that are consistent with the intended use of the property.

c. The League opposes any changes to Section 14, paragraph (c)(3) of ANSCA that would reduce the ability of municipalities to receive their full entitlement to lands.

##### C. State land management

###### **1. *State land use decisions***

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

###### **2. *Invasive species***

a. The League supports efforts to manage marine and terrestrial invasive species.

###### **3. *Land disposals***

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

###### **4. *Enforcement***

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

##### D. Coastal Zone Management

###### **1. *Local control and participation***

a. The League supports maximum local control and involvement in the development, management, implementation, and expedited appeals process of coastal planning policies. The League recognizes the vital role that coastal districts and coastal resource service areas (CRSAs) provide in reviewing these plans and policies. Re-instatement of the program should continue to include review and evaluation processes.

**2. Agency review of local district programs and projects**

a. 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.

**E. Watersheds**

a. The League supports continued funding for the protection, restoration, and maintenance of watersheds and appropriate development.

**F. Wetlands**

a. The League supports the protection, restoration, maintenance and use of wetlands for appropriate development. The League supports the development of a regionalized rapid assessment approach to evaluate wetlands for unique characteristics.

**G. Land sales and subdivisions**

**1. Recording requirements**

a. All property owners should be required to record any land transfer or boundary change within 30 days to the Recorder's office.

**2. Inspections**

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

**3. ADEC review of plats**

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

**H. Geographical information systems**

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

**I. State policies affecting land use**

**1. Regulatory authority**

a. The League opposes state and federal legislation that attempts to limit land use regulatory authority of municipalities by any means. Any state legislation or rule that requires an implementation or operation cost, shall be fully funded by the implementing agency.

b. The League urges the state legislature and executive branch to engage in discussions of studies with the federal government/agencies prior to adoption of federal regulations which impact the state of Alaska, to prevent adoption of federal regulations without knowledge of local impacts specific to the state of Alaska. The League encourages for adequate funding to be provided by the Attorney General's office to protect the interests of Alaskan communities against undue federal encroachments to the development of Alaskan interests.

**2. Gravel extraction**

a. The League supports legislation that sets priorities for reasonable extraction of gravel and sediments in or near streambeds for prevention, control, mitigation of erosion, flooding, or damage. As these resources belong to the people of Alaska, extraction for public purposes should be free of royalty payments to the state.

**3. Leaking storage tanks**

a. The League requests the state to authorize the Board of Storage Tank Assistance, the underground storage tank revolving loan fund, and the tank cleanup loan program.

**4. Transfer of federal lands**

- a. The League urges the state of Alaska to assist and cooperate with federally recognized tribes, municipalities and other entities for the expeditious transfer or retransfer of federal lands.

## **J. Global climate change**

### **1. Funding for research on the effects of climate change in Alaska**

a. The League supports increased state and federal funding for research in Alaska on effects of global climate change, including marine and terrestrial ecosystems, 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 and opportunities of climate change.

b. The League supports local efforts to relocate communities impacted by climate change, mitigation and local erosion, and encourages increased state and federal funding for these efforts.

## **RESOURCES AND 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 diversified and sustainable economies.**

### **A. Authority and incentives**

#### **1. Cooperative projects**

a. The League encourages expansion of a private, public and non-profit “partnership” approach to economic development on a statewide and regional level.

#### **2. Alaska Regional Development Organizations**

a. The League urges the state Legislature to increase funding to the Alaska Regional Development Organizations (ARDORs) and encourage expansion to unserved areas.

#### **3. Denali Commission**

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

#### **4. Workforce development**

a. The League supports funding for continued workforce development at the local level.

#### **5. Entrepreneurship, micro-enterprise and small business**

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

b. The League urges the increase of state and federal funding to the Alaska Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and to leverage more private funds.

### **B. Impact**

#### **1. Impact assistance**

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

#### **2. Development Projects**

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

#### **3. Natural resource development policies**

a. The League supports the adoption and implementation by the state of Alaska of a Natural Resource Development plan, in cooperation with local governments, regional conservation districts and 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.

#### **4. *Economic development***

a. The League supports the development, adoption, and implementation of a statewide economic development strategy in cooperation with local governments, regional conservation districts and the private sector.

### **C. State 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 assist rural communities' residents in realizing the potential of tourism in their communities, and in understanding the challenges and impacts.

c. Alaska tourism marketing: The League supports ATIA requests for continued funding for Alaska tourism marketing.

d. Independent travelers: The League supports increased marketing efforts to attract more independent travelers.

e. Parks and recreational facilities: The League supports increased funding for staff, maintenance and operation of parks, trails for motorized and non-motorized users, including legacy or regional trail systems and other recreational facilities to accommodate, disperse and expand recreation opportunities for residents and visitor.

f. International exchanges: The League supports local, state and federal efforts to encourage trade, tourism and exchanges to educational and scientific projects between the people of the state of Alaska and international communities.

#### **2. *Fish and game***

a. Policies: The League urges the Legislature to work with the state administration to develop a long-term statewide policy on commercial fisheries and game management, focusing on scientific resource management and limiting political influence. The League supports Alaska's right and responsibility to cooperatively manage fish and game resources.

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

c. Fish and game enhancement, protection and projects: The League supports Fish and Game enhancement and protection programs, funded through Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

d. Habitat protection: The League encourages the state to develop programs and policies for fisheries habitat protection in cooperation with affected local governments.

e. Adequate share for Alaska under salmon treaties: The League urges state and federal negotiators on the North Pacific Salmon Commission to ensure that Alaskans have a proportionate and equitable share of the fish controlled by treaty.

f. Research: The League supports increased state and federal fisheries, mammals, and avian research programs and dissemination of results to local communities. The League supports full federal funding for the domestic observer program.

- g. Marine mammal research: The League requests the state to fund peer reviewed scientific research on any marine mammals that are threatened or listed as depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) or the Endangered Species Act. The League urges the state legislature to reestablish and fund the Marine Mammal Coordinator position in Fish and Game.
- h. Fisheries business tax credits: The League supports fisheries business tax credits that would allow onshore fish processors to receive credit for capital improvements to fish processing plants for value added processing. The League supports the application of the fisheries business tax credit to cooperative or municipal utility construction related to value added processing.
- i. Marketing: The League supports state funding of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI), with emphasis on wider distribution of higher value products. The League supports a geographic balance on the Board of Directors of ASMI.
- j. Fresh product marketing access: The League supports the development of marine, air and ground transportation links for the purpose of enhancing the marketing of fresh fish and higher value products.
- k. Crab management: The League strongly urges the state to retain jurisdiction over management of the crab fishery in the federal Exclusive Economic Zone. The Legislature is urged to appropriate any additional funds necessary to allow the state to comply with federal requirements.
- l. Mariculture: The League supports the development of a sustainable year-round, private shellfish mariculture industry, in a manner compatible with existing fisheries and other traditional activities.
- m. Aquaculture: The League supports Alaska's shore-based salmon hatchery program and continues to oppose finfish aquaculture.
- n. State control of fishery management: The League urges the state to provide the necessary funding to maintain and enhance the collaborative programs with state and federal agencies. The League urges the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to incorporate provisions in any comprehensive management plan relating to federal fisheries off Alaska's coast, to ensure processing, create viable communities, and maximize opportunities for Alaskan fishermen to enter and participate in these fisheries.
- o. High seas interception: The League supports continued state and federal efforts to end the high seas interception of Alaska's fisheries resources and illegal taking of fish in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.
- p. Fish escapement count: The League urges the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to review its fish escapement goals and procedures for accuracy on all anadromous waters and seek broad public concurrence. The League supports full funding for a comprehensive approach for wild salmon management and recovery with clearly defined goals that reflect the priorities and needs of its local, regional, tribal and state partners and stakeholders.
- q. Fisheries management: The League urges the state to call upon the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to recognize communities as genuine stakeholders in fisheries, due to significant and ongoing infrastructure investment and traditional dependence on fisheries resources and to consult with communities in a significant way prior to the development and during the modification of such programs.
- r. Crew data collection: The League urges the state to expedite the development of collecting crew data for use in social and economic impact studies in the development and modification of fisheries management programs.

s. Socio-economic impacts: The League urges the state and the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to gather and use data regarding socio and economic impacts on communities to modify existing development of future fisheries management policy.

t. Meetings: The League urges the state to hold Board of Fisheries meetings in affected localities.

### **3. Agriculture and timber**

a. Agriculture: The League supports commercial agriculture as essential to food security. The League supports state and local encouragement of agriculture through farmland preservation, the opening up of new agriculture lands with adequate road access, the authority for municipal tax credits, education and research, and aggressive support of the development, processing, and marketing of Alaska agricultural products.

b. Timber: The League supports the sustainable management of federal, state, municipal and privately-owned timber resources, with an emphasis on local value added manufacturing and marketing of Alaska wood products.

c. The League supports state funding for a resource development marketing program with emphasis on the value and importance of Alaska timber and mineral resources.

### **4. Oil, gas and mineral resources**

a. Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR): The League urges the Congress of the United States to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve to environmentally responsible oil and gas exploration, development, and production. The League strongly supports the 90-10 split of revenues, as required by the Statehood Act.

b. National Petroleum Reserve/Alaska (NPPRA): The League supports oil and gas leasing and other mineral entry in the National Petroleum Reserve/Alaska. The League strongly supports the 90-10 split of revenues as required by the Statehood Act.

c. Exploration and development: The League encourages the state of Alaska to promote environmentally responsible oil, gas and mineral exploration and development that is not detrimental to Alaskan fisheries or subsistence activities.

d. Tax and royalty incentives: The League supports the implementation by the state of Alaska of tax incentives that promote oil and gas exploration in mature and marginal oil and gas fields that would otherwise be uneconomical.

e. Rural natural gas wells: The League supports development of rural natural gas wells for local consumption and urges the state to fund a pilot program to test this technology.

f. Mineral development: The League supports private exploration and development of mineral resources, including state-owned minerals, as well as the review of resource extraction fees. The League also urges the state of Alaska to redistribute federal mineral revenue sharing funds to local governments. The League supports a review of state tax and royalty rates for mineral extraction. The League supports state involvement in international mining proposals and activities that could impact Alaska watersheds.

g. State and local cooperation: The League encourages state and federal agencies to fully participate with local governments in public processes associated with resource development decisions made by those entities.

h. Carbon sequestration: The League supports the study of carbon sequestration with proportionate amounts of those carbon sequestration credits going to local government.

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

### **5. Renewable and sustainable energy resources**

a. Energy plan: The League encourages the state of Alaska to establish a long-term sustainable energy plan for the state and local communities; undertaking initiatives for energy conservation; supporting development of cost effective alternatives, renewable

and clean energy resources; and addressing environment, infrastructure, and potentially conflicting federal compliance impacts.

b. Available resources: The League supports the development of federal, state, municipal or privately-owned wind, hydro, tidal, solar, biomass and geothermal resources.

**6. Waste disposal and site reclamation**

a. Standards: The League encourages the state and federal governments to adopt, enforce and maintain acceptable standards concerning waste disposal and site reclamation, which includes a financial bond, following resource extraction.

**7. Human resources**

a. Alaska hire: The League supports and encourages all efforts on the part of the Legislature and state administration to implement a statewide Alaska hire policy.

b. Training incentives: The League supports the development of incentives that would encourage the Alaska education system, contractors, and other employees, to train and hire local workers.

## PART IV

### PUBLIC WORKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The goal is to recognize the importance of and advocate for transportation, energy programs and infrastructure for the economic and social well-being of communities and their residents.

#### A. State policies affecting local communities

##### **1. Payment and performance bonds for public works projects**

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

##### **2. Deferred maintenance**

a. The League recommends a high priority be placed on funding the backlog of deferred maintenance projects on the state and local level.

##### **3. Force accounting**

a. The League supports a municipality's right to use force accounting.

##### **4. Retainage accounts**

a. The League requests that the state base the retainage account interest payment requirements on actual interest earned by municipalities, not a flat 10.5% rate.

##### **5. Financial sustainability**

a. In order to protect infrastructure investments, maintenance and operations must be considered in the overall funding of projects, with local participation in the development of reasonable criteria to ensure projects are sustainable.

##### **6. Building officials**

a. The League supports the rights of local communities that have statutory deferral to enforce the state building codes.

##### **7. Safety code adoption**

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

##### **8. Construction standards related to energy efficiency**

a. The League encourages the state to consider recommendations for standards related to energy conservation and energy efficiency.

##### **9. Affordable housing**

a. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation: The League supports legislative approval for the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation budget request.

b. Tribal designated housing entities: The League supports and encourages any effort to include language in state policies, statutes, and regulations that would give tribal designated housing entities the same access to planning activities, loans and grants as are now available to Alaska housing authorities.

#### B. Transportation

##### **1. Transportation planning**

a. The League supports the implementation of a statewide comprehensive transportation plan with strong local input. The League encourages ADOT to recognize local needs and not override STIP rankings.

b. The League supports the development of a transportation infrastructure fund.

##### **2. Surface transportation**

a. State transportation system maintenance: The League supports increased funding for maintenance of the state transportation system, to reflect the increasing costs and age of the system.



- b. State/local road maintenance: The League supports increased funding for local roads and maintenance.
- c. Federal highway funds: The League strongly recommends the state Department of Transportation and Public Facilities:
- Provide for an appropriate sharing of federal receipts for local road needs;
  - Expend at least 10% of the surface transportation program for construction of project upgrades and at least 10% for safety programs.
  - Set aside a percentage of federal highway funds to be allocated for the maintenance of road, trail, and transit projects.
  - Provide directed federal funding in full to communities with limited administrative fees.
  - Support local control through coordination with Rural Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) and Metropolitan Area Planning Organizations (MPO) for transportation solutions.
  - Enter into a Memoranda of Agreement with local tribal governments for road maintenance and construction.
  - Encourage uniform criteria that would allow local, state and federal transportation funding to coordinate project development and design.
- d. Trail marking: The League strongly urges the continuation of a statewide program of uniform permanent trail marking and that annual winter maintenance and trail staking be established and funded by the state, with local input.
- e. Costs of railroad crossings: The League supports the Alaska railroad having the responsibility and incurring the cost of maintaining railroad crossings, traffic safety signals, and related infrastructure.
- f. Historic rights-of-way (R.S. 2477): The League supports funding to assert R.S. 2477 designation.
- g. Public and coordinated transit: The League supports the recommendations from the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force (CTTF). The League supports an annual state appropriation to match federal and local funding to expand transportation services across the state.
- h. Pedestrian/bicycle lanes: The League supports legislation to require that provisions for and funding of pedestrian/bicycle/ATV lanes and/or paths are included on all major state road and rail projects.

### **3. Air transportation**

- a. Airport maintenance: The League supports adequate funding for equipment, maintenance and operation of airports, including Homeland Security requirements.
- b. Transfer of land and facilities for municipal airports: The League supports the transfer of federal and/or state lands and facilities to municipalities, if requested, to provide for needed construction and expansion of municipal-owned airport facilities and operations.
- c. Airport construction assistance: The League supports an equitable approach to state construction assistance for both state and municipal airports.
- d. Minimum runway lengths: The League supports that runway lengths that are adequate to ensure safe transportation of people and goods, meet each community's needs.

### **4. Marine transportation**

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

- b. Port and harbor development: The League supports the transfer to municipalities of federal and/or state lands to provide for needed expansion and/or development of municipal-owned port and harbor facilities and operations, if requested by the municipality.
- c. State-owned harbor maintenance funding: The League supports state funding of maintenance for state-owned harbors and not deferring the cost to the local government.
- d. Statewide port and harbor planning: The League urges the state to partner with the Denali Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete a comprehensive statewide ports and harbors plan.
- e. Abandoned and derelict vessels: The League urges modification to AS 30.30 to allow municipalities to have the full protection afforded in the Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Act, and also urges federal and state legislators to work together to develop a system for funding the removal and abandoned marine vessels from Alaska/US waters.

**5. Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)**

- a. Long-range planning and stable funding for maintenance, operation, and expansion of the system are necessary to ensure the most effective service to the users of the system, and the most efficient operation of the vessels. The League strongly recommends:
  - A baseline schedule to be developed with community input and adopted and published at least 3 years in advance for all AMHS routes.
  - The AMHS be included on an equitable basis with other state transportation plans.

**C. Utilities**

**1. Funding assistance for utilities**

- a. Sustainable water and sewer funding: The League urges the state to create a sustainable state-funded water and sewer program.
- b. Municipal Matching Grant Program: The League strongly supports continuation of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation’s Municipal Matching Grant program.
- c. Village Safe Water program: The League strongly supports continuation of the Village Safe Water program and the funding of the Remote Maintenance Worker program. The League supports state technical and financial assistance to rural communities to improve the basic sanitation facilities and supports appropriate funding levels to meet the ongoing needs of rural Alaskan communities.
- d. Revolving loan programs: The League strongly supports continuation of revolving loan programs such as the Drinking Water Fund and the Clean Water Fund.
- e. Provide funding for construction and upgrades to electric power infrastructure, including interties.

**D. Energy**

**1. Statewide energy plan**

- a. Implement a statewide energy plan to provide reliable, sustainable, environmentally sound and affordable energy to all citizens of Alaska and promote efficiency and economic development opportunities.
- b. The League recommends that the state:
  - Support full funding of the PCE Endowment through state appropriations;
  - Continue to upgrade or replace bulk fuel facilities;
  - Support bulk fuel cooperatives and fuel delivery options;
  - Improve diesel powerhouse efficiency;
  - Increase support for renewable and alternative energy including hydroelectric;
  - Expand Energy Efficiency Conservation and Building Weatherization program;

- Support Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program;
- Support energy funding for school districts.

**2. Natural gas**

a. The League supports the immediate development of projects to bring the state's natural gas and natural gas liquids to as many local communities, as possible.

**E. Solid waste collection, disposal and landfills**

**1. Solid waste reduction programs**

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

**2. Cleaning up our communities**

a. The League supports the funding for clean-up of junk/abandoned vehicles and also supports legislation that will ease notice requirements in Title 28 for disposing of abandoned vehicles which are more appropriately defined as scrap metal.

b. The League supports changes to state statute to require transfer of title upon sale of a vehicle and that license plates not be issued to vehicles improperly registered.

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

**3. Public landfills**

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

**F. Telecommunications and computing**

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

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

**2. Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR)**

a. The League supports state funding for installation and ongoing maintenance costs of ALMR radio systems statewide.

**3. Bridging the digital divide**

a. The League supports efforts to ensure affordable, high-speed communications, including, but not limited to, internet, wireless and cellular access statewide. Especially in consideration of Alaska's many physically remote communities, reliable, high-speed communications access is critical to economic development, commerce, education and training.

**4. State oversight of emergency communications**

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