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Member of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman  
Senate Finance: Subcommittee: Admin  
Alaska State Legislature

February 10, 2021

Senator Hoffman,

Alaska's local governments depend on the Dept. of Administration to support State services.

Our members are discouraged to see the proposal to eliminate six offices of the Division of Motor Vehicles (Homer, Haines, Delta Junction, Valdez, Tok, and Eagle River). At some point, this reduction becomes untenable. It increases the likelihood of outmigration from these communities, reduces the quality of life, increases costs, diminishes labor opportunities, and limits economic growth. Additionally, acquiring a REAL ID requires an individual to show up in person to acquire the federally required ID. DMV fees cover the costs of running the DMV offices across the State so the reductions in funding make no sense and accomplishes nothing except to reduce opportunities. Permitting and licensing are basic and essential government services and rural communities should have access to these basic services. It is worth requesting an update on REAL ID implementation, which was given an extension during this pandemic. We are unclear as to the efforts to meet the needs of all Alaskans in this federal requirement.

The Administration's budget continues to reflect – building on previous vetoes – a disinterest in supporting Alaskans' access to public radio and TV, and we request full funding of these programs, or a plan to divest them from the State with adequate funding in place to sustain them into the future. Alaska's communities, especially our more remote communities, depend on these vital media systems for life, health and safety issues. During the recent pandemic public radio has been essential to disseminate information widely and quickly across the state.

AML remains interested in the support of the State's Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) infrastructure, and its maintenance. We hope to hear more about its status.

Senator, I know that these issues are important to you, the rest of the subcommittee, and to your constituents. Please feel free to request from AML any additional information or testimony in support of these issues.

Respectfully,

Nils Andreassen  
Executive Director