



Alaska Conference of Mayors Expects Legislative Action

August 10, 2021

The Alaska Conference of Mayors (ACoM) appreciates the efforts of legislators and the Governor to address short- and long-term needs of the state. Everyone has a role, everyone has responsibility.

In many ways, the outcomes from this last legislative session have meant holes in a budget that Alaskans depend on and created uncertainty and instability in our communities. The combination of failed CBR and reverse sweep votes and the Governor's vetoes has impacted residents, businesses, and local governments.

At ACoM's most recent meeting, mayors expressed frustration with a process that has not been resolved over more than five years. The Legislature and Administration have been unable to come to agreement on a sustainable fiscal policy for the State of Alaska. That has had annual repercussions.

At the upcoming special session, ACoM calls for leadership and action – our hopes and expectations are high. Delay is detrimental.

It is reasonable to expect action on short-term needs, including to address shortcomings in the current fiscal year budget. It is reasonable to expect further deliberation on long-term solutions, including that action occur to consider the product of the bipartisan, bicameral Comprehensive Fiscal Policy Working Group. Resolve what you can, keep working on the rest, and implement according to a sensible timeframe.

ACoM recognizes that one of the major hurdles is how the Legislature and Governor approach valuation of the PFD relative to the State's Constitutional and statutory obligations. Mayors will meet in the weeks ahead to take that question on, wrestling with how to view, vet, and prioritize the State's responsibilities. We know that legislators will be tackling these same considerations throughout the special session. Both are part of a public process.

The time spent during this upcoming special session has value beyond votes – the legislative structure allows for active public participation as part of a deliberative process. Invited testimony can help address and evaluate how legislators may weigh their votes. Public testimony allows for a stronger democracy. The special session and legislative process is fundamental to addressing next steps.

Mayors stand ready to contribute their expertise and input into a process that moves Alaska forward. We know that by pulling together, we can achieve much, quickly.