

RESOLUTION #2020-09

Supporting the effort to maximize local self-government, respect local control, and encourage the State to provide funding for the adoption of powers and incorporation, including borough formation where feasible.

WHEREAS, Alaska's Article X on local government requires the State to provide for maximum local self-government (with a minimum of local government units and to prevent duplication of tax-levying jurisdictions); and

WHEREAS, the context within which this was written included examples from other states of multiple tax-levying entities with overlapping authority, from school districts to cities and utilities; and

WHEREAS, the State has kept its framework for local government fairly straightforward, with classes of cities and boroughs that have non-duplicative responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, there remain numerous communities that have not incorporated, including within the Unorganized Borough, which itself remains unincorporated; and

WHEREAS, AML has prioritized over its history a principle of local control, which should be understood as the belief that State government should not direct or restrict municipal decision-making; and

WHEREAS, local control is different than a community's interest in incorporating as a city or a region as a borough; and

WHEREAS, in fact, an unincorporated city or borough is ceding local control for State management, and depriving residents of maximum local self-government; and

WHEREAS, one role of the State may be to incentivize incorporation or organization of the city and borough, including to encourage and provide resources for the adoption of additional powers; and

WHEREAS, municipal governments in Alaska provide important services to residents, including public safety, education, public infrastructure, and quality of life programs; and

WHEREAS, during periods of fiscal uncertainty, active and healthy local governments can provide the backstop on loss of services and continue to maintain community and economic development.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League supports the effort to maximize local self-government, respect local control, and encourage the State to provide additional resources for the adoption of powers and incorporation, including borough formation where feasible.