

RESOLUTION #2021-01

In support of a legislative process that recognizes local governments as inherent partners in the delivery of State objectives.

WHEREAS, there are 165 incorporated city and borough governments in Alaska, acting as political subdivisions of the State; and

WHEREAS, through Constitutional and statutory authority, local governments have the State's powers and responsibility to tax and deliver services in the public interest; and

WHEREAS, there is no formal mechanism for local governments to contribute to the development of the Governor's budget, wherein agencies, OMB, and the Governor develop budgets that directly impact local governments but without their input; and

WHEREAS, throughout a legislative session, local government officials are directed to provide input as part of the "public" comment process; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has committees in the Senate and House that are dedicated to Community and Regional Affairs, but are potentially underutilized in developing an agenda that helps the Legislature understand the condition of communities; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's office often has a dedicated staff member acting as their lead for local governments relations, but the equivalent does not exist within the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, local government leaders are in a good position to contribute meaningfully to policy development and budget decisions, understanding both impact and local variation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML recommends that:

Section 1. Legislative leadership name Committee members or staff that will serve as local government liaisons, assisting in sharing local government information with legislators as appropriate; and

Section 2. A joint session of the Legislature be called to have addressed each year the Condition of Communities; and

Section 3. In cooperation with AML, the House and Senate Community and Regional Affairs committee chairs, and other Committee chairs as appropriate, establish a session and/or interim agenda that provides legislators, agencies, and the public with greater awareness of local government issues; and

Section 4. The Legislature establish a dedicated opportunity for local government contributions as part of all committee processes, prior to and outside the public comment process, including as a more formal component of invited testimony.