

RESOLUTION #2023-03

A resolution urging the Governor and Legislature to exercise oversight of the Local Boundary Commission, to meet the Constitutional obligation for maximum local self-government.

WHEREAS, Article X of the Alaska Constitution obligates the State to provide for maximum local self-government, and Alaska's economy depends on well-supported local self-governance, which is more effective at adaptively meeting community needs than state or federal intervention; and

WHEREAS, the status quo has left communities in the unorganized borough without the tools to consider or pursue incorporation, the State has left communities to cede local control for State management, thus depriving residents of maximum local self-governance and its benefits, and Alaska's communities are required to depend on the State to establish or amend their boundaries and status, even as local governments are providing essential services in the face of changing conditions, fiscal uncertainty, and global instability; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution created the Local Boundary Commission as the mechanism by which municipal boundaries are confirmed, and which the Legislature and Governor set policy, composition, and procedure for; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution's framers intended the Commission to bring flexibility, adaptability, and rationality to local government boundaries by analyzing proposed changes fairly and objectively consistent with maximum local self-government and the Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature and Commission set the precedent of using the legislative review method as the primary procedure for Commissioners' consideration of annexation, ensuring that the framers' vision for the local boundary process was implemented accurately; and

WHEREAS, by veering from precedent and disregarding their obligation to a fair and objective process, the Commission has created a process that does not result in greater local self-governance, deterring communities from seeking boundary changes, growth, and incorporation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska Municipal League urges the Governor and Legislature to exercise oversight and review policy of the Local Boundary Commission, including confirmation by the Legislature of Commissioners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League urges sitting and prospective Commissioners to the Local Boundary Commission to consider their procedures and decision-making to ensure the fairness and objectivity required of them; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that State policymakers revisit how they can support well-reasoned annexation, incorporation, and borough formation to meet the obligation for maximum local self-government, the Mandatory Borough Act, and the intent of the Constitution.