

RESOLUTION #2023-05

**A resolution supporting the sustainability
of Community Assistance.**

WHEREAS, Community Assistance (known formerly as Community Revenue Sharing) represents a decades-long partnership between local governments and the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, that partnership is a recognition of the State's retention of royalty and production rights on resource development, that local tax bases would not be able otherwise to ensure operations, and the need to deliver essential public services outside of State government; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance has seen continued degradation over the years, including in 2015 a reduction of 50%, and if measured from FY20 to FY85 and adjusting for inflation, the value of Community Assistance should be 984% greater than it currently is; and

WHEREAS, Community Assistance represents as much as 80% of some local government budgets, and for 100 communities greater than 20%; and when Community Assistance was zeroed out in the early 2000s, 14 local governments ceased day-to-day operations; and

WHEREAS, the formula of the Community Assistance Fund determines the annual payment to communities, with a payout of a third of available funds; and the availability of funds designated in statute to recapitalize Community Assistance is based on the waterfall of earnings from the PCE Endowment; and

WHEREAS, when earnings are less than needed, it has been the policy choice of the current administration to fund less than what is needed for full recapitalization, which has resulted in payments to communities that are increasingly inadequate; and

WHEREAS, when this intergovernmental transfer or resource sharing does not occur it requires local governments to consider other revenue mechanisms, such as taxes, or diminishes their ability to provide services; and

WHEREAS, at the same time, inflation has negatively impacted the purchasing power of this annual transfer, thereby negating some of the benefits that local governments might otherwise expect; and

WHEREAS, it would require legislation to address the fact that the Community Assistance Fund does not retain its earnings and payments aren't inflation adjusted; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League believes that community revenue sharing is a critical way in which the State can contribute to local governments' ability to deliver on obligations of education, public safety, infrastructure, and economic development.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League requests of the Legislature statutory changes that ensure the capitalization of the Community Assistance Fund and enable it to grow through earnings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature include in legislation the ability to increase payments to local governments that account for inflation and include additional transfers to compensate local governments for their provision on behalf of the state of basic obligations (police, jails, etc.), reimbursements (bond debt), or unfunded mandates (mandatory exemptions).