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Member of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties

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RE: Public Testimony for SB 200

To: Senate Resources

The Alaska Municipal League, representing Alaska's 165 local governments, appreciates the effort to clarify and modernize the farm use assessment statute in SB 200. We generally support the intent behind the technical fixes advanced within this legislation.

Our concern is with the bill's expansion of the underlying exemption. As revised, the definition of "farm use" is broadened to include flowers, and the definition of "livestock" is expanded to expressly include horses. The bill also removes prior language tying qualifying agricultural products to human or animal consumption or the sustenance or grazing of livestock, and it deletes the requirement in the definition itself that the owner file a Schedule F.

From a municipal perspective, that is a significant policy change. It moves the bill beyond a narrow food security rationale and toward a broader tax preference for a wider range of private business activity. This is an expansion in principle, not merely a clarification. The targeted response to support food production is now broad and imprecise. The intent to support small, local agricultural producers is lost in the broadness of the bill. The shift away from a clearly food-oriented standard, combined with the broader inclusion of horses and flowers, risks turning a limited policy into a subsidy for certain businesses rather than a focused measure to strengthen local food systems.

We appreciate the movement toward technical fixes in this bill. However, the expanded exemption in the current form is problematic in principle and should be narrowed before the bill moves forward. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure food security in Alaska is advanced, with local governments in a position to be partners in its progress.

Respectfully,

Nils Andreassen  
Executive Director