

From: Bill Howell [<mailto:bhowell@cityofbethel.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 07, 2017 1:37 PM
To: Rep. Zach Fansler <Rep.Zach.Fansler@akleg.gov>
Subject: GEMT

Representative Fansler,

I am attaching the draft Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) legislation for your review. I just received this today so I apologize for the delay in getting it to you. I've been advised that this has been presented to other legislators but has yet to receive a sponsor. As I am sure you are aware, many fire departments including Bethel are providing ambulance services well below cost.

GEMT would amend Alaska's State Medicaid plan to reimburse municipalities for the uncompensated costs of providing ambulance services to Medicaid recipients. Currently Medicaid pays an average of \$455 per transport. Our ambulance service here in Bethel and many around the State spend over \$1000 per transport. GEMT would reimburse that difference. Participation in GEMT is voluntary for cities.

The GEMT program would help close the gap in funding to ensure fiscal sustainability for many ambulance services. In Bethel, our ambulances and fire vehicles are in dire need of replacement and we simply lack funds. Based on some preliminary estimates I've made, GEMT has the potential to bring in as much as \$468,000 a year for the City of Bethel.

I know the State budget is the priority, GEMT legislation fits in that discussion. GEMT is fiscally positive for the State. The State would receive up to 20% in administrative costs for administration of the program, on top of what is reimbursed to municipalities/Cities. We both know how revenue sharing is dwindling, GEMT could help mitigate that to some extent as well.

If this legislation was passed it would be a game changer for the Fire Service in Alaska. In Bethel it would allow us to get the ambulances and fire trucks we haven't been able to afford since the oil boom of the 1980's. Like me, I learned that many other Fire Chiefs that I met at the conference are struggling to provide basic services due to lack of funding.

Your service and support is greatly appreciated by me and all of us here at Bethel Fire. Please contact me anytime on my personal cell 545-4305.

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Warmest Regards,

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The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.
—Amelia Earhart