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

The Honorable Louise Stutes
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 406
Juneau AK, 99801

March 11, 2020

RE: HB 273 Abandoned Vehicles

Dear Representative Stutes,

Thank you for introducing HB 273, "An Act relating to vehicles abandoned on private property." Alaska's members have communicated an interest in support of this bill, inasmuch as local governments are supportive of legislation that strengthens their ability to address local challenges. Abandoned vehicles plague local governments, and more importantly property owners. In addition to life, health and safety issues, they drain the capacity of local government employees, who spend time managing complaints and processes that delay action. They also increase costs for property owners.

Below are some examples from AML members:

- 1) In my community there was a permitted junk yard/wrecking yard. Unfortunately, the owners sold out to a group in Fairbanks and it then operated only seasonally with absentee owners. During the "off-season" people would sneak in through the back of the property and dump any and all vehicles they no longer wanted, without appropriate transfer of title. The City started nuisance enforcement action against the owners for a number of reasons. They had to take responsibility for everything on their property – even vehicles dumped illegally. Had SB183 been in place, the junk yard owners would only have to wait 30 days to notice and apply for title to have legal rights to dispose of the vehicles dragged in without permission.
- 2) In my role at the city, we would begin nuisance abatement proceedings against small commercial or residential lot owners for "junk" vehicle storage. I always heard, "Well, my buddy just left it here. I don't have title. He's coming back to work on it." SB183 would mean no more excuses for a property owner to avoid cleaning up a lot for months because of a title transfer issue when their buddy is nowhere to be found. Thirty days and you notice and apply for title. Then they have to clean up.
- 3) The shortened time would be advantageous to municipalities and private property owners. Currently, when a vehicle is abandoned on private property, the process to remove the vehicle is time consuming. The private property owner either has to leave it there for 6 months or pay to have it towed and secured in another location for 6 months until it can be declared "abandoned." Abandoned cars are not only an eyesore, they also tend to "collect" other abandoned cars – they often get stripped by people who are looking to make a quick buck. If the time frame can be shortened it gives law enforcement officials and private property owners the ability to deal with the problem before it escalates.

Representative, we appreciate any help to strengthen the tools with which local governments and property owners have available to address this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Nils Andreassen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director