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**MEMBER SOCIETIES**

Alaska Society of  
Professional Engineers  
(ASPE)

Alaska Society of  
Professional Land Surveyors  
(ASPLS)

American Institute of  
Architects, Alaska Chapter  
(AIA)

American Society of Civil  
Engineers, Alaska Section  
(ASCE)

American Society of  
Landscape Architects,  
Alaska Chapter (ASLA)

American Council of  
Engineering Companies of  
Alaska (ACEC)

American Society of Interior  
Designers, Alaska Chapter  
(ASID)

Institute of Transportation  
Engineers, Alaska Section  
(ITE)

Structural Engineers  
Association, Alaska (SEAAK)

## 2021 LEGISLATIVE POSITION STATEMENT

The Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) is a non-profit corporation that represents the common interests of Alaska's design professionals. We represent approximately 5,000 members including architects, engineers, land surveyors, landscape architects and interior designers that live and work throughout Alaska. The following is our position on issues before the Alaska State Legislature this year:

**HB 104 – Motor Fuel Tax; Vehicle Registration Fee**

APDC has been in favor of increasing the motor fuels tax for some time. For the past few years, the State of Alaska has merely matched Federal funds for highways, airports, and ports. There has been little to no independent expenditures for this important infrastructure. The Alaska State motor fuels tax is only 8 cents per gallon and has been that since 1970. Inflation would require 54 cents to buy what that 8 cents bought in 1970. Increasing the tax to 16 cents per gallon is a small step to closing that gap. The bill also addresses the need for vehicles that do not use fuel to pay something toward the upkeep of the roads on which they drive. This bill will help provide funds to operate and maintain our roads, as well as match Federal money for capital projects. **APDC urges your support.**

**HB 61 – Registration for Commercial Interior Designers**

APDC has endorsed registration for Commercial Interior Designers, who design new, and modify existing, interior spaces in buildings of public occupancy. Their work may involve components that affect life safety issues, whether it be exiting, fire ratings of walls, or fire ratings of finishes. Currently, exiting and fire ratings require the involvement of an architect, but in some cases an architect is not involved and building officials do not always enforce that requirement. In order to protect the public safety, registration of Commercial Interior Designers will provide some assurance that the people doing this work have been qualified based on education experience, and examination, like other design professionals. APDC's endorsement of this registration is not unanimous, eight of nine member organizations support this. The American Institute of Architects is opposed. However, we are unanimous in our support of the additional two seats to assure that an electrical and mechanical engineer are always on the AELS Board.

**HB 148 – Alaska Coordinate System of 2022**

APDC supports House Bill 148: "An Act relating to the Alaska Coordinate System of 2022," as an amendment to Alaska Statute 38.20. The modernized coordinate system has been developed by the National Geodetic Survey and Alaskan stakeholders as part of advancing a modern, more functional, state-wide coordinate system. This amendment is needed because private and public industries cannot support the new system unless it is codified into law. It is expected that every state will adopt a similar bill to update their system.



## **Sustainable Operating Budget**

APDC supports the legislative development of a sustainable operating budget that includes additional revenue generation that is applied across the breath of the population. The method will vest all citizens of Alaska in responsible state government. **Statewide income tax, permanent fund formula change, and statewide sales tax, are all acceptable sources of revenue.**

## **Capital Budget**

APDC recommends a minimum annual capital budget of \$2.1 billion and to keep the funding level, rather than have it bounce up and down. The capital budget is intended to help avoid closures of maintenance stations and to ensure that existing infrastructure can be maintained in a good state of repair over the next 5 years. The Alaska Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) released a 2017 Report Card that graded the condition of Alaska's public infrastructure. This report shows that Alaska's public infrastructure requires additional capital investment to decrease the costs of deferred maintenance, avoid further deterioration, upgrade facility operations, and improve public health and safety. Since 2014, the State's capital budget has been inadequate. The longer we delay funding, the more it will cost to catch up with the deterioration of our infrastructure. Additional capital investment will protect our infrastructure as well as stimulate the economy. ASCE's report card can be found at: [www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/alaska](http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/alaska). An updated report card will be released later this year.



***\$2.1 BILLION CAPITAL BUDGET NEEDED!***



## **Maintenance Funding**

Since 2013, funding for the maintenance and operations of State' transportation facilities has decreased by 15%, which equates to more than \$22 million. The reduction in maintenance adversely impacts the State's ability to operate and maintain our most critical infrastructure, including snow and ice removal, ability to respond in emergencies, and providing adequate preventative maintenance. Properly maintained infrastructure is not only vital to the Alaska economy, but it also increases the useful life of our facilities.

## **HB 15 and SB 86 – Temporary and Courtesy Licenses**

APDC is not opposed to these bills, as long as it is clear that they do not apply to architecture, engineering, land surveying, or landscape architecture registration. Unlike some professions, the practice of which are unchanged by moving from one state to another, such as the medical professions or barbers and hairdressers, the Alaska climate presents challenges that are not taught to the typical design professional Outside. Thus, a course in Arctic Engineering is essential for the privilege of practicing architecture, engineering, or landscape architecture in Alaska. Similarly, land surveyors must be knowledgeable of the different issues related to boundary surveying in Alaska. People who come here temporarily, such as military or their spouses, may work for licensed professionals to get the necessary expertise while fulfilling the requirements for licensure. Allowing these individuals to practice unsupervised, even temporarily, without verification of that expertise is counter to the basis for registration: public safety. Thus, these bills must have the permissive "may", rather than the directive "shall," in language regarding the Division's powers to grant license to individuals licensed Outside.

## **Earthquake Preparedness**

The November 30, 2018 earthquake in Southcentral Alaska showed how unprepared the State of Alaska was to respond. APDC supports the continued efforts of the Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission (ASHSC) to complete screening level and detailed seismic hazard assessments for all public schools and other critical facilities in Alaska. To date, some assessments have been performed in some school districts, but additional resources will be needed to complete the effort. APDC supports this policy recommendation of ASHSC, and specifically supports identification and execution of structural seismic retrofit of schools where engineering analysis reveals the necessity. APDC also supports their recommendation to adopt current building codes as soon as practicable and to provide enforcement mechanisms as outlined in their Policy 2020-1.