



greater
FAIRBANKS
chamber of commerce

ADVOCACY AGENDA

2020 Priorities

#1 LONG-TERM FISCAL PLAN

Alaskans need a long-term fiscal plan that utilizes earnings from the permanent fund; makes government more efficient; encourages resource development and business-friendly practices; and includes passage of an appropriate and timely capital budget.

#2 SUPPORT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA

Ensure Fairbanks remains the flagship campus of the University of Alaska and home to its statewide leadership and maintains its capabilities in the areas of education, research, business development, and public-private partnerships for the development of intellectual property. The Chamber urges the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor to ensure that University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) continues to supply the essential workforce needs of Alaska's businesses and continues to be an economic driver in Interior Alaska.

#3 OPPOSE OIL TAX INITIATIVE

The Chamber opposes the latest attempt to raise taxes by a ballot measure. The "Fair Share Act" is a targeted tax on some of the state's largest investors and would stifle future investment in this high-cost state.

2020

Advocacy Agenda



ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Alaska's Interior will only thrive if the business and economic climate is healthy. The local economy is heavily dependent on a few key industries: tourism, government, health care and natural resource development. Diversification is important to the long-term sustainability of the Greater Fairbanks area.

Fiscal Plan

- Government leaders need to pass a responsible budget, in a timely manner, balancing state revenue against expenses. Alaskans need a comprehensive, long-term sustainable fiscal plan promising state funds to essential programs while looking ahead to strategic investing that will promote long-term economic growth.
- Support a statute that provides a formula to allocate the percent-of-market-value draw from the permanent fund earnings to create predictability in general fund revenues and dividend payments.
- Oppose new industry-specific targeted taxes at the state and local level, including increases on existing targeted taxes, unless self-imposed by the industry. Increases in industry-specific taxes should not fund general services.

Public Policy

- Initiative petitions ask voters to make simple yes or no decisions about complex issues without subjecting them to detailed expert analysis. Changes in the initiative process should produce better public policy in a comprehensive and balanced manner equally benefiting both voters and the legislative process.

Support the University of Alaska

- Ensure Fairbanks remains the flagship campus of the University of Alaska and home to its statewide leadership.

Ensure it maintains its capabilities in the areas of education, research, business development, and public-private partnerships for the development of intellectual property. A vibrant university is vital for the education of our citizenry, the development of a well-trained workforce, and the research necessary to address the state's critical challenges. The Chamber urges the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor to ensure that the University of Alaska Fairbanks continues to supply the essential workforce needs of Alaska's businesses and be an economic driver in Interior Alaska.

Business and Community Development

- To create jobs for Alaskans, the legislature must focus on ways to encourage private investors in all sectors; bring Alaska's oil, minerals and timber into production; and diversify employment opportunities available within the state.
- Support the demolition plan for the Polaris Building in downtown Fairbanks. Enhance the economy through Explore Fairbanks' efforts to develop a convention and arts center.

Arctic Opportunities

- Promote economic development, and improve health, safety and emergency response in Alaska's Arctic.

Criminal Justice

- Continue to support a more efficient and effective criminal justice system aimed at reducing recidivism through substance abuse and mental health treatment programs, prevention and supervision programs, while continuing to enhance public safety.

Arts Engagement

- Promote the efforts of the arts community that make the greater Fairbanks area a more attractive place to live, work and visit by strengthening the partnership between business and the arts and cultural communities.

Health Care

- Support ongoing health care and Medicaid reform to lower the cost of health care and support long-term health insurance solutions for businesses and the individual marketplace in Alaska.
- Improve the balance in workers' compensation insurance between providing fair, timely and efficient compensation to injured workers and cost to employers.
- Facilitate educational opportunities to assist small and medium sized businesses reduce the cost of health insurance.
- Support reforms that reduce health insurance premiums and increase the amount that can be deposited into health savings accounts.



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Interior Alaska businesses demand an educated, trained, and readily available skilled workforce. The Chamber recognizes the critical need for quality learning opportunities starting in preschool through post-high school in order to develop, attract and retain employees ready to meet the economic and social needs of Interior Alaska.

Workforce Development

- Promote workforce-training options such as certificate, endorsement, apprenticeship and professional development in all sectors in an effort to improve, supplement and sustain the skill set of our local workforce.
- Promote workforce development through career and technical education at all grade levels, as well as concurrent enrollment in high school and college (dual enrollment).
- Promote workforce partnerships between UAF, UAF Community & Technical College, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and industry partners.
- Promote an educated workforce through post-high school education to include credential training in high-demand sectors as a key element of advancement.

Systemic Change

- Advocate for timely budget approval at all levels of government for K-12 and post-high school institutions to promote consistency of personnel and continuity of programs.
- Support efforts to increase the number of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filers in the Interior.
- Advocate for thorough analysis of solutions to provide accessible and affordable childcare options in the Interior.
- Support efforts to increase grade-level reading skills to ensure that more children succeed in school, a career and active citizenship.

Business Partnerships

- Connect, recognize and support member businesses that provide work-based opportunities and training in the spirit of both economic and community development; endeavor to enhance financial literacy in the Interior; and support family-friendly workplaces, including providing childcare options for employees.



ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

High energy costs are a barrier to economic opportunity in Interior Alaska. Affordable energy will encourage capital and infrastructure improvements and lower costs for residents and businesses.

Responsible development and management of Alaska's natural resources is critical to supporting a growing economy and improved quality of life for Alaskans. Environmental legislation should minimize any cost-prohibitive rules and regulations for businesses and development projects while protecting our air and water resources.

Sustainability

- Pursue the development and balanced management of Alaska's natural resources including energy, minerals, forestry, wildlife and agriculture, while protecting Alaska for future generations.
- State and federal regulatory and permitting laws should support exploration, site development, employment, infrastructure, research and production.
- Support self-sustaining recycling efforts promoting wise stewardship.

Resource Development

- Support long-term, stable local, state and federal fiscal, regulatory and tax policies that foster increases in investment leading to more development and production of resources.
- Support development of a North Slope natural gas project that will provide competitive gas for both in-state consumption and export to foreign markets.
- Support legislation that prohibits specific mineral taxes at the local level, maintaining that authority at the state level, and implements revenue sharing of a portion of the Alaska Mining License Tax to municipalities or boroughs that host a metal mine.

Affordable Energy

- Promote home and business energy audits and weatherization programs.
- Support the community's efforts to get natural gas to as many Interior Alaska customers as possible, at the lowest cost possible, as soon as possible through the Interior Energy Project.
- Support reasonable and prudent efforts to meet the federally imposed PM 2.5 regulations.
- Support efficient, affordable and reliable power production for Interior Alaska.



MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Chamber commits to develop, maintain and support cooperative and beneficial partnerships between the military and Interior Alaska businesses that stimulate regional economic growth; promote the capabilities and sustainability of our Interior military installations; and support our servicemen and women, their families and their role in defending our nation's interests.

Military Development and Operations

- Support efforts by the Fairbanks North Star Borough, City of Fairbanks and City of North Pole to establish military facility zones as a vehicle to obtain and administer funds for business development specifically relating to military activities.
- Support efforts to expand military roles and missions on all Interior military installations including: Eielson Air Force Base, Clear Air Force Station, Fort Wainwright, Fort Greely, and the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex.
- Support community-compatible land-use and air space proposals to secure the missions of local military installations.
- Promote Military Community Partnership programs with private businesses and the use of local contractors for federal military projects.

Service Members

- Create community connections to improve quality of life for service members, families, and veterans in the Fairbanks community.
- Assist veterans, retirees, transitioning service members, military spouses, National Guard members and Reserve Component members in finding employment and education opportunities.
- Support Interior National Guard and Reserve activities and efforts to highlight the benefit of our hometown heroes, including the basing of additional assets in the Interior, the expansion/upgrade of facilities, the Air National Guard aerial refueling tanker aircraft upgrade and other initiatives.



TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

It is critical to the long-term economic development and job growth potential for Interior Alaska that we restore functionality and resiliency to our failing infrastructure after years of deferred maintenance and delayed improvement projects. Stable, accessible and well-managed infrastructure is crucial so that established businesses can succeed and new businesses might be attracted to the Interior.

Transportation and Infrastructure Funding

- Support reliable revenue for Alaska's infrastructure and motorized and non-motorized transportation systems to:
 - Maintain existing infrastructure and restore functionality lost through years of deferred maintenance.
 - Develop improvement projects to enhance safety, access and mobility.
 - Develop new infrastructure that will economically benefit the region or improve maintenance capabilities.
- Support timely funding of the state capital budget.
- Reinstate funding for the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning (FAST Planning).
- Support the creation of an Alaska Transportation Infrastructure funding program.
- Support U.S. Congressional efforts to secure viable, long-term solutions for the Federal Highway Trust Fund and the Federal Airport & Airway Trust Fund.

Transportation Hub

- Enhance Fairbanks as the air, road and rail transportation hub for Interior and Northern Alaska.
- Support responsible development to access economic points of interest.

Agency Engagement

- Monitor state and federal budgeting to ensure priority infrastructure projects receive adequate attention.
- Support timely state agency permitting review times.
- Encourage active pursuit of efficiencies in development, permitting and delivery of maintenance and capital programs.

OUR MISSION

The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce represents our members by advocating for a healthy economic environment and by building partnerships that promote the greater Fairbanks area as an attractive place for business and community.

Advocate

We advocate for and work toward the best environment possible for businesses, both big and small, to survive and thrive in the Greater Fairbanks Area.

Promote

We create awareness that drives economic strength and growth for Interior Alaska.

Develop

We strive to be an informational resource and a networking hub where enterprising people can use and share knowledge.



ADVOCATE. PROMOTE. DEVELOP.

100 Cushman Street • Suite 102 • Fairbanks, AK 99701
(907) 452-1105 • info@fairbankschamber.org
FairbanksChamber.org/Advocacy-Agenda