



Achieving mobility through community appropriate transportation services

Legislative Alert – Senate Finance Hearings on 2022 Operating and Capital Budgets

The AMC is the only organization that advocates for public and community transportation options for Alaskans. Our membership, representing a coalition of over 40 public and human service agencies from across the state, serves the mobility needs of seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income Alaskans who have no other means of transportation support. ***Our systems provide over 5,000,000 rides annually for Alaskans to get to work, medical appointments and social activities.***

Today and tomorrow the Senate Finance Committee has been and will be taking public testimony on the state budget for next year. Please keep in mind that the budget is made of lots of moving parts, but the primary vehicles are the following three bills and links to these bills and all relevant documents are included:

[SB 49 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS](#)

[SB 51 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET](#)

[SB 50: APPROP: CAPITAL; REAPPROP; SUPPLEMENTAL; AMMENDED](#)

It is not important that you read through them all. We're going to provide to you what AMC believes are the relevant parts included, or what is not included, and some talking points. Try to weave those into your own testimony about your community transportation system or your personal stories as user of such systems. If you do so by phone (highly encouraged) please read the attached [COVID Tips for public testimony](#), and/or in any written testimony that you provide to finance.committee@akleg.gov NOTE: THERE ARE NO OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN PERSON PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR NOW! It never hurts to share any written testimony with your specific legislators. If you do not know who that is, you will find at the bottom of the Legislature Home page a place to type in your address and your Senator and Representative will come up.

Technically, we missed the first round today, but Thursday, March 18 is another opportunity. The morning rounds are specific to Alaskan residents from Southeast, Prince William Sound communities and Kodiak, starting at 9:00 am. You must call in by 10:30 at the latest, but you can get on the list before then.

The afternoon rounds are for Fairbanks and Interior, Copper River Valley, and the rest of the state, starting at 1:00 pm, and sign up by 2:30 at the latest. You need to call the numbers below to get on the schedule. The kind folks at the Legislative Information Office will explain how it works but please read the attached tips on testimony. Speak for yourself if not representing an agency in an official capacity.

For Juneau residents call 907-586-9085 Anchorage residents call 907-563-9085 All others call 844-586-9085

Please do not worry if you do not get to speak or say everything you wanted to say. Put it in writing and send it too. Attached is AMC's talking points.



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AMC Legislative Talking Points for 2022 State Budget

Status of Federal COVID Relief funds for Rural Transit (RT) and Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). The State has been allocated just over \$27 M in federal CARES Act funding (2020) to help Rural Transit providers meet their needs during the COVID Crisis. The State allocated 65.3% to the 12 RT providers across the state and 34.7% to AMHS. The state now expects \$55.7 million in CRRSAA (2021) funding for the same purposes. DOTP&F is discussing how to spend this money internally and their strategy has not yet been shared with AMC members. What we have heard is concerning; that AMHS wants all of it to meet their budget shortfall, which is nowhere near \$55 Million. While we support the needs of AMHS, they must be at the table with us, and not working against the other rural transit providers who have legitimate budget strains as well. The two thirds RT/one third AMHS split seems fair as a starting point, especially given that the ridership numbers provided to the federal government, which determine our federal allocation of Rural Transit funding are provided by the 12 RT providers and not AMHS. **Legislative Ask: *In allocating these funds, and future funding for Rural Transit in general, the Legislature and the Governor must take in the needs of all the providers, not just the AMHS. We suggest maintaining the 2/3rds RT, 1/3 AMHS split.***

Public and Community Transit Match: DOTP&F \$ 1 Million in GF—*This program was ended two years ago during budget cuts and is not included in the 2022 Governor's Budget.* The Community match program has existed for many years, and the amount has varied from a high of \$2,000,000 to a low of \$500,000. Funding was used by large and small transit and human service transportation providers alike to help meet the match requirements of over \$10 million in federal funding being drawn down by the state or local public transit agencies. Most federal transit programs require local match funding of 10-50% match, depending on the source of funds. Not all local communities, or human service transportation providers, have access to tax revenues or other sources to meet the match requirements, and therefore cannot apply for the federal funds. Without a state match fund, providers struggle to find ways to meet their match requirements, often having to curtail services to reduce their budget overall. We estimate that out every state dollar invested in this program, we get a return of \$3 in federal funds. **Legislative Ask: *Reconstitute the Public and Community Transit Match Program in FY 22 in the Capital budget (SB 51) and help us bring even more federal dollars into Alaska to support community transportation needs across the state.***

Mental Health Coordinated Transportation and Vehicles: DOTP&F \$1.3 Million (\$300.0 MHTAR; \$1,000.0 GFMH) – *This project is in the Governor's 2022 Budget proposal.* This project is designed to increase the mobility of Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries. Funding is granted to private nonprofit and public transportation providers through a competitive grant process. In addition to helping beneficiaries, each community transportation system serves as an economic engine for the community - more people can get to job interviews, job training and jobs, while employers find it easier to obtain and keep dependable employees. **Legislative Ask: *Thank the Governor and the Legislature for including this project as proposed by the Alaska Mental Health Trust in SB 51.***