

Aitkin County Board of Commissioners  
Request for County Board Action/Agenda Item Cover Sheet



To: Chairperson, Aitkin County Board of Commissioners Date: 1-3-13

Via: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

From: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

Title of Item:

Aitkin County 2013 Legislative Platform

Requested Meeting Date: 1-8-13 Estimated Presentation Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenter: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator

**Type of Action Requested** (check all that apply)

- For info only, no action requested
- For discussion only with possible future action
- Let/Award Bid or Quote (attach copy of basic bid/quote specs or summary of complex specs, each bid/quote received & bid/quote comparison)
- Approve/adopt proposal by motion
- Authorize filling vacant staff position
- Request to schedule public hearing or sale
- Request by member of the public to be heard
- Item should be addressed in closed session under MN Statute \_\_\_\_\_
- Approve under Consent Agenda
- Adopt Ordinance Revision
- Approve/adopt proposal by resolution (attach draft resolution)
- Other (please list) \_\_\_\_\_

**Fiscal Impact** (check all that apply)

- Is this item in the current approved budget? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (attach explanation)
- What type of expenditure is this?  Operating  Capital  Other (attach explanation)
- Revenue line account # that funds this item is: \_\_\_\_\_
- Expenditure line account # for this item is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Staffing Impact** (Any yes answer requires a review by Human Resources Manager before going to the board)

- Duties of a department employee(s) may be materially affected.  Yes  No
- Applicable job description(s) may require revision.  Yes  No
- Item may impact a bargaining unit agreement or county work policy.  Yes  No
- Item may change the department's authorized staffing level.  Yes  No



**Supporting Attachment(s)**

- Memorandum Summary of Item
- Copy of applicable county policy and/or ordinance (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable state/federal statute/regulation (excerpts acceptable)
- Copy of applicable contract and/or agreement
- Original bid spec or quote request (excluding complex construction projects)
- Bids/quotes received (excluding complex construction projects, provide comparison worksheet)
- Bid/quote comparison worksheet
- Draft County Board resolution
- Plat approval check-list and supporting documents
- Copy of previous minutes related to this issue
- Other supporting document(s) (please list) AMC Legislative Policy Positions 2012-2013

**Provide (1) copy of supporting documentation NO LATER THAN Wednesday at Noon to make the Board's agenda for the following Tuesday. (If your packet contains colored copies, please provide (4) paper copies of supporting documentation as we do not have a color printer or copier.) Items WILL NOT be placed on the Board agenda unless complete documentation is provided for the Board packets.**

# AITKIN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

**Aitkin County Courthouse**  
217 Second Street N.W. Room 130  
Aitkin, MN 56431  
218-927-7276  
Fax: 218-927-7374

**TO: Aitkin County Board of Commissioners**

**FROM: Patrick Wussow, County Administrator**

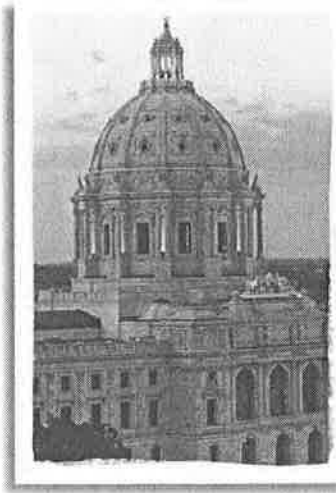
**RE: Aitkin County 2013 Legislative Platform**

**DATE: January 3, 2013**

Attached is the Association of Minnesota Counties' Legislative platform. The platform was adopted at the Annual meeting in December, 2012. At this time each year the County Board reviews the platform and identifies the County Board's legislative priorities for Aitkin County.

The County Board will need to identify what they feel are the top legislative priorities for 2013.

Please review the attached document and contact me with questions.



# **Legislative Policy Positions 2012-2013**



Approved December 5, 2012

*It is the mission of the Association  
to assist in the provision of  
effective county governance  
for the people of Minnesota.*

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# Broadband Development

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- AMC supports identifying and implementing actions to achieve by 2015 the goal of statewide deployment of advanced broadband networks and symmetrical high-speed capacity.
- AMC supports initiatives to make it easier for cities, municipal utilities, schools, libraries, and other public sector entities to collaborate and deploy broadband infrastructure and services at the local and regional level.
- AMC supports public/private collaboration to achieve state broadband goals, including partnerships and cooperation in providing broadband services and infrastructure.
- AMC supports removing barriers to the exercise of local authority to provide such services, including repeal of Minn. Stat. § 237.19, that requires a supermajority voter approval for the provision of local phone service by a local unit of government.
- AMC supports offering incentives to private sector service providers to respond to local or regional needs and to collaborate with cities and counties to deploy broadband infrastructure capable of delivering sufficient bandwidth and capacity to meet immediate and future local needs.
- AMC supports completely and continuously updating comprehensive statewide maps of broadband services to identify underserved areas and connectivity issues.
- AMC opposes the prohibition of public money to be spent on broadband infrastructure projects.

# Chemical Use and Abuse

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## Alcohol and Other Drugs

- AMC supports use of the chemical dependency treatment fund for prevention and treatment strategies supported by evidence-based practice.
- AMC supports adequate state financing and other resources to counties to address chemical dependency, including integrated models of treatment.
- AMC supports alcohol tax increases to more closely reflect the health and public safety costs related to alcohol and other drug abuse (including prescription and over-the-counter drugs) and alcohol and drug-related injuries. Additional state funding is needed in key areas of chemical dependency prevention, screening, treatment and aftercare, and probation supervision.
- AMC supports state funding for mandated detoxification services.
- AMC supports the implementation and enforcement of statewide policies that restrict the production and sale of illegal synthetic drugs.
- Support state and local policies that prevent underage alcohol and tobacco consumption.

# Child Safety and Well Being

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AMC supports state resources to assure that all children are safe and supported in permanent living situations.

## Child Safety

- AMC supports stable, adequate state funding for child safety and well-being, distributed to counties on the basis of performance. This funding is intended to:
  - ▶ Prevent child abuse and neglect;
  - ▶ Whenever possible, taking into consideration the child's safety and well-being, maintain children in their own homes
  - ▶ Keep children in safe, permanent living situations whenever possible;
  - ▶ Continue family relationships; and
  - ▶ Assure that parents have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs.
- AMC supports the policy that all child placement orders issued by tribal courts become the financial responsibility of the State.

## Child Support

- AMC supports adequate state funding to counties to fulfill their child support responsibilities to offset federal funding reductions.
- AMC supports simplifying the administration of child support services to reduce court costs and improve efficiency.

# Children's and Family Health

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AMC supports stable, flexible state funding and public policy to support healthy families.

## Maternal and Child Health

- AMC supports additional state funding for county-delivered maternal and child health services, such as evidence-based home visiting programs.

## Systems

- AMC supports state funding for locally-based collaborative activities among counties, schools, cities, and other local organizations to promote healthy families.
- AMC supports state funding to counties and other organizations to eliminate health disparities in Minnesota's ethnic, racial, refugee, and low-income populations, many of who have lower health status than other Minnesotans (including interpreter services, strategies to improve health care access, and workforce training).
- Support funding for collaborations that work across systems to eliminate health inequities.
- AMC supports state fiscal strategies to reduce dependence on public funding for long term care, such as expanding availability of long-term care insurance and extending look-back periods for assets for medical assistance.

## Tobacco and Youth Risk

- AMC supports continuing state funding to counties to prevent tobacco use and other youth risk behavior.
- AMC supports policies that encourage smoke-free foster care settings for children.

# Community Health

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AMC supports stable, flexible state funding and public policy to improve and maintain healthy communities.

- AMC supports the statewide health improvement plan or other forms of funding to counties for health promotion efforts to prevent chronic disease throughout the life span.
- AMC supports state funding for home and community-based care.
- AMC supports the Clean Indoor Air Act.
- AMC supports planning, zoning and funding efforts to create “livable and sustainable communities” that encourage physical activity and other healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- AMC supports increased resources for development of programs, partnerships, monitoring and data collection systems, and other initiatives to prevent and reduce violence.
- AMC supports increasing the tobacco tax and expanding it to tobacco related products in order to support prevention and health-related costs of tobacco use.

# County Administration and Management

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AMC supports policies that promote effective and efficient county government that provides quality services to meet the needs of Minnesota citizens without infringing on the decision-making ability of local elected officials.

## *County Structure*

### **Administrative Streamlining**

- AMC supports greater flexibility and opportunity for county administrative reorganization.
- AMC supports greater authority to use technology for communications and efficiency improvements.

### **Appointment Process**

- AMC supports a uniform, statewide process to allow individual counties and their residents to locally initiate and determine the selection of county row officers such as the auditor, treasurer and recorder.

## *Data Practices*

- AMC supports policies that enable sharing of private and confidential data (with appropriate safeguards) between corrections departments, court systems, health and human services agencies and schools when the different agencies are providing services for the same person, including juveniles.
- AMC supports efforts to improve public access to data held by governments where it may benefit consumer transactions.

## ***Election Administration***

- AMC supports federal and state funding commensurate with the cost to counties for complying with added federal and state voter equipment requirements or election administration standards.
- AMC supports initiatives to reduce the costs and administrative requirements of Election Day voter registration that maintain accuracy and integrity in the process.
- AMC supports electronic overseas voting for eligible citizens if ballot security is not compromised.
- AMC supports the authorization of absentee voting without condition for a limited period prior to an election.
- AMC supports the use of federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds for personnel administering polling place duties or other requirements under the Act.
- AMC supports policies that encourage voter registration.
- AMC supports requiring candidates for county office, when filing an affidavit of candidacy, to certify that they will have maintained residence in the county or district from which they seek election for 30 days before the primary election date.
- AMC opposes moving the state's primary election from August to June.

## ***Employee Benefits***

### **Health Care**

- AMC supports clarifying state law to allow for a fair and effective collective bargaining process that accounts for issues of cost versus value of employee benefits.
- AMC supports county authority to decide whether to join with other entities to form employee pools for health care benefits.
- AMC supports changes to the conditions for participation in the Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP) that include a requirement for representation by all insurance eligible employees to determine whether all insurance eligible employees will join PEIP.

### **Pensions**

- AMC opposes the creation of new pension plans for individual groups of county employees and the transfer of certain job classes to plans that increase benefits and costs to the employee and employer.

### **Long-Term Care**

- AMC supports granting county employees the eligibility to voluntarily purchase group rate long-term care insurance through the Minnesota Public Employee Long Term Care Insurance Plan.

## ***Intergovernmental Relations***

### **Joint Powers Agreements**

- AMC supports cooperative activities between units of government, the protection of existing joint activities, and the elimination of barriers that hinder the creation of such arrangements.
- AMC supports the application of the rules, regulations and requirements of its individual forming members on to a joint powers entity.
- AMC supports a strong state-county relationship and supports the ability of counties to work with the state through a collaborative process to improve service delivery. AMC opposes any efforts by the state to takeover county services without utilizing a collaborative process to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure long-term success and identify clear objectives and outcomes for taxpayers and citizens.



## **Private/Public Partnerships**

- AMC recognizes the economic and societal benefits of public/private collaborations and supports policies that encourage partnerships between government and non-government entities that address the needs of our communities.

## **Local Government Collaboration and Consolidation**

- AMC opposes state-mandated county consolidation, and believes the state should not prohibit or interfere with local government cooperation and collaboration.

## **State-County Relations**

- AMC believes the state should secure the support of an individual county or specific group of counties before enacting any law that specifically impacts that individual county or group of counties.

## ***Inverse Condemnation***

- AMC opposes legislation that allows businesses to seek inverse condemnation when a county provides competing goods or services, or limits the number of private operators.
- AMC opposes the creation of an automatic cause of action for damages any time a local regulatory action impacts the use or reduces the value of private property.

## ***Libraries***

- AMC supports greater flexibility for libraries to form regional partnerships.
- AMC supports adequate funding of Minnesota's existing library system.
- AMC supports local control in determining the appropriate level of local funding for county libraries.

## ***Licensing***

- AMC supports allowing counties and deputy registrars to sell motor vehicle license tabs online, or to share in the revenue generated by the state's online sales.

## ***Open Meeting Law***

- AMC supports more effective and efficient public notice alternatives and authority to utilize technological tools to conduct needed business.

## ***Public Records***

- AMC supports changing state law to no longer require that social security numbers be collected for marriage license applications.

## ***Technology***

- AMC supports greater cooperation between counties and the state department of revenue to improve the effectiveness of property tax administration software and reduce overall costs for both local and state government.

# Disease Prevention and Health Protection

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AMC supports state financial resources and public policy to protect the public from communicable disease and promote healthy behaviors to prevent chronic disease.

## Emergency Preparedness

- AMC supports state funding and authority for state and local governments to plan and prepare together for public health and other emergencies or disasters that impact the state.

## Infectious Disease

- AMC supports policies and funding to ensure that all people in Minnesota are immunized against communicable diseases.
- AMC supports funding and authority for county public health departments to investigate and respond to infectious disease cases, such as active and latent tuberculosis, through monitoring, directly observed therapy, care coordination and treatment.
- AMC supports the use of scientific evidence as a basis for agency action and other decision-making about vaccine safety and other health practices.

## Environmental Health

- AMC supports the authority of all counties to locally operate a food, beverage, and lodging establishment program supported by a locally determined fee structure.
- AMC supports a financing structure for core state environmental health activities that is sufficient to ensure that the state can effectively provide oversight, technical support, and information to counties and local food beverage and lodging establishments and is based on an appropriate fee structure.
- AMC supports policies and funding that promote early intervention to remove lead hazards, and other Healthy Homes hazards, before children are exposed, including legislation that would enable counties to obtain Medical Assistance reimbursement for lead risk assessments.

## Public Health Infrastructure

- AMC supports restoring and maintaining funding for essential local public health services through the local public health grant.
- AMC supports providing state funding and authority for a state-local public health information system.

# Economic Self-Sufficiency

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AMC supports state funding and policy to help people move away from dependence on public economic assistance yet provide a safety net for those unable to work.

## Affordable Housing

- AMC supports repeal of policies requiring counties to count housing subsidies as income.
- AMC supports development of affordable housing options for low-income people.
- AMC supports providing state funding for counties to assure supportive services within housing options as a way to prevent homelessness.

## Child Care

- AMC supports child care policies that assist parents to maintain employment by assuring access to high quality, safe child care.
- AMC supports restoring eligibility for child care for low and moderate income families.
- AMC supports a state process to determine eligibility for child care assistance that is simple and easy for families, providers, and counties to navigate.
- AMC supports state funding and immunity protection for county responsibilities in licensing in child care establishments.
- AMC supports the state assuming responsibility for child care background checks.

## Income Supports/Work Readiness

- AMC supports individual access to high quality employment training that leads to greater self-sufficiency and that improves the overall skill level and productivity of the workforce.
- AMC supports exceptions from the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) work participation requirements for individuals who have demonstrated inability to work due to physical or mental disability, time spent completing their education, or serving as a caregiver for disabled family members.
- AMC supports requirements to verify eligibility for public programs based on citizenship as long as these processes do not result in substantial additional administrative burdens for counties.
- AMC supports general fund support for the Minnesota Youth Program, which provides work experience and academic enrichment activities to economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth.
- AMC supports funding for family stabilization services sufficient to enable all counties to provide case management, payment monitoring, and initiation for eligible clients, as required by law.
- AMC supports funding for supportive work programs to provide hard-to-employ MFIP recipients with paid work experience.
- AMC supports changes to state law to protect counties from being required to make indemnity payments to unpaid work experience participants in work readiness
- AMC supports innovations to simplifying the process of determining eligibility for and enrollment in income support programs.

# Energy

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AMC supports collaborative efforts in the areas of research, development, and use of all forms of renewable energy statewide.

## Energy Independence

- AMC supports wind energy generation, methane and all other sources of renewable energy as part of a comprehensive energy independence program.
- AMC supports statewide incentives for alternative energy options, including waste to energy and methane recovery, such as producer payments or credits for technology similar to those granted to the wind, ethanol, and bio-diesel industries.
- AMC supports adding the availability of E85 to the MNDOT highway signage programs.
- AMC supports the use of hydropower and clean burning coal.
- AMC finds that there is a need to provide affordable power to constituents and supports efforts that would make this possible.
- AMC supports repealing the prohibition on building nuclear energy facilities.
- AMC supports methods of conservation, improving efficiency and minimizing the environmental impacts of all methods of energy production.
- AMC supports continued funding for the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERT) Programs.

## Electric Transmission and Distribution

- AMC supports greater cooperation and communication between the state, local units of government and private industry for the siting and access to pipelines and other energy sources and electric transmission and distribution systems.

# Health Care Financing, Access and Quality

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AMC supports assuring the opportunity for all Minnesotans to be healthy and supports public health activities that prevent disease and disability and promote health for the whole population. AMC supports health care for all Minnesotans that adds value by improving quality and patient satisfaction; decreasing medical errors, cost, and waste; and maximizing return on investment. Counties shall be a key stakeholder in any proposal that transfers county administrative or program delivery roles to new entities such as tribal governments, non-profits, or the private sector.

## New Health Care Delivery Systems & Health Care Homes

- AMC supports allowing counties or county-based purchasing plans to propose, implement and participate in new care delivery and payment demonstration projects for Minnesota Health Care Programs. AMC supports authorizing the county to designate the rural coordinated care delivery system project that will operate a demonstration project in a rural area if there are multiple competing proposals or projects serving the same geographic area.
- AMC supports requiring provider-sponsored Minnesota Health Care Program demonstration projects to partner with counties so that health care services are coordinated with local county services affecting patients' health, such as public health, social services, mental health, housing and other services.

- AMC supports certification of health care homes throughout Minnesota that:
  - ▶ Ensure multiple options for certification so that providers in all parts of the state are able to participate;
  - ▶ Expand the types of providers and teams eligible to serve as a health care home or care coordinator; and
  - ▶ Provide collaboration of care across public and private sectors and coordination between medical and non-medical services.

### **County-Based Purchasing**

- AMC supports expanding county-based health care purchasing to additional populations and geographic areas through either a single plan approach or a model where competition is required by federal law, by following federal requirements whereby county-based purchasing competes with only one additional health plan for counties that fall within Metropolitan Statistical Areas.
- AMC supports default assignment of enrollees to the county-based purchasing plan if an enrollee does not make a choice of health plan.
- AMC supports the formation of locally controlled health plans to serve as an alternative to large statewide and national health insurance plans to give consumers and employers additional health plan choices.

### **Dental**

- AMC supports state funding for a sustainable model for dental care for low-income people.

### **Financing, Administration and Systems**

- AMC supports state and federal investments in technology modernization at the Departments of Health and Human Services. These investments will improve the efficiency of county staff that enter information into the systems and enhance customer service.
- AMC supports maintaining health insurance coverage for low income Minnesotans. AMC opposes solutions that result in cost shifts or funding reductions to counties to cover these populations.
- AMC supports solutions that better integrate health care and social services to reduce costs and improve health outcomes, including the implementation and full funding of demonstration projects.
- AMC supports state funding for county uncompensated care costs.
- AMC supports adequate state funding to cover the cost of county administrative functions in Minnesota Health Care Programs.
- AMC supports state policy to allow for seamless enrollment and continuation in Minnesota Health Care Programs (e.g., MA and MinnesotaCare).
- AMC supports simplifying the process of determining eligibility for and enrollment in Minnesota Health Care Programs.
- AMC supports continued funding and authority for the county roles of network development and service integration for special populations, such as the elderly, disabled, and mentally ill, who receive services through Minnesota Health Care Programs as these populations are moved to a managed care model.
- AMC supports state and federal funding to cover county costs of administering the new MnChoices assessment process.
- AMC supports maximizing federal revenues to support Minnesota's health care programs.

# Land Use Planning and Regulation

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AMC supports wise management of the state's environmental and natural resources through effective enhancement of local, state, and federal governance.

## Animal Agriculture County Permitting Programs

- AMC supports the voluntary enforcement of state standards by counties with county authority to be more restrictive than state standards.
- AMC supports increased state funding for counties that elected to be delegated within the Pollution Control Agency feedlot program.
- AMC supports the ability of counties to withdraw from the county feedlot delegation agreement in the event the funding level declines below what is necessary to administer the program.
- AMC supports a statutory definition of feedlot capacity as "permitted capacity."
- AMC recognizes the need to provide assistance to feedlot producers correcting their feedlots and supports raising the eligibility limit for the feedlot cost share from 300 animal units to 999 animal unit facilities that are not large concentrated animal feeding operations.

## Comprehensive Planning and Zoning

- AMC supports local governments' ability to balance the rights of private landowners with the interests of the public through the fundamental authority local units of government have to protect the public health, safety and welfare of citizens.
- AMC supports legislative efforts that do not reduce, or interfere with the ability of counties to carry out land-use activities such as zoning, planning, and the permitting of development.
- AMC supports the legislative effort to develop and fund a statewide high-resolution Digital Elevation Model.
- AMC supports a balance of the interests of the community and the rights of the landowner by allowing local decision making to protect the health, safety and welfare of local residents using local planning and zoning.

## Cumulative Potential Effects

- AMC supports a statutory clarification of the definition of "cumulative potential effects".
- AMC supports maintaining the existing EAW decisional criteria in EQB rules.
- AMC opposes any effort to require a "cumulative impacts" analysis as part of the EAW process, or as part of the shoreland review process.

## Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAW) / Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)

- AMC supports efforts to revise the EAW and EIS process rather than creating new thresholds to trigger the necessity of undergoing an EAW or EIS.

## Noxious and Invasive Plant Management

- AMC supports requiring the Minnesota Department of Transportation, railroad authorities and other state and federal agencies to control and fund the timely eradication of noxious weeds on their lands and rights-of-way.
- AMC supports fully funding state and federal efforts to carry out activities to eradicate invasive plants and other species in a timely manner. AMC supports increased state activities to educate and assist residents and local governments in their efforts to control invasive species.

## **County Park Funding**

- AMC supports adequate state and federal funding to counties for the acquisition, maintenance and operation of county parks, open space and recreational lands.
- AMC supports adequate state and federal funding for the development of county parks, open space, and recreational lands, except in a county with 50 percent or more public land ownership. Those counties could elect to participate in this funding using the dollars received for ongoing maintenance, upkeep, or their capital improvements benefiting existing county-owned parks, trails and recreational facilities.

## **Public Land Management**

- AMC supports requiring federal and state agencies to formally notify and solicit county input prior to all proposed land acquisitions.
- AMC opposes efforts to alter or remove the local approval process for the establishment or expansion of wildlife management areas (WMAs).
- AMC opposes the creation of buffer areas through restrictions on local ordinances or other methods that may negatively impact adjoining property owners.

## **Rulemaking**

- AMC opposes opening the shoreland rules for rulemaking until the DNR and the local governments responsible for implementing the rule agree to the scope of potential rule changes.

## **Small Community Systems**

- AMC supports increased funding to bring more small community septic systems into compliance.

## **Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)**

- AMC supports requiring individual sewage treatment systems to be inspected and disclosed prior to the sale or transfer of property.
- AMC supports county-based efforts to develop an inventory of the compliance status of all SSTS' in the county.
- AMC supports establishing a statewide database of best practices that local government use to administer and educate the public concerning SSTS systems.
- AMC supports ongoing state-funded financial assistance programs for homeowners. These programs should include financial assistance for low-income SSTS owners who are unable to fund system upgrade or replacement without this support, including funding counties to establish revolving loan and other financial assistance programs.
- AMC supports state funding for county implementation of the state SSTS program at a level commensurate with county costs to do so.
- AMC supports county authority to adopt an SSTS component of the county water management plan.

## **Township Zoning**

- AMC supports efforts to clarify the zoning relationship between counties and townships.
- AMC supports a requirement for townships that choose to adopt zoning ordinances to perform all zoning activities and to carry out the enforcement of the zoning ordinances.

# Mandates

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## Maintenance of Effort Requirements

- AMC opposes state mandated maintenance of effort requirements as they interfere with local decision-making and budget prioritization.

## Reform and Removal

- AMC opposes the imposition of mandates and costs on counties without full and stable funding from the federal or state government needed to prevent property tax increases. If mandates are not accompanied with commensurate funding, they must be removed.
- AMC supports the realignment of service and funding responsibilities that would provide lasting fiscal reform for mandated services.
- AMC supports periodic legislative review or automatic sunset of all federal- or state-imposed mandates.

# Mental Health

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AMC supports state policy and financing to assure a full range of mental health services that: promote mental health, prevent mental health problems, treat mental health conditions, and allow people with mental health conditions to function as effectively as possible in the community.

## Civil Commitment

- AMC supports state assumption of the cost of hold orders for sex and alcohol offenders and other people awaiting civil commitment.
- AMC opposes the requirement that counties share the cost of civil commitment of sex offenders and supports comprehensive reform to the current policies in order to reduce the cost of civil commitment, including a review of the commitment process, while maintaining an adequate level of protection for the public.

## Mental Health System Reform

AMC supports state mental health reforms that include the following components:

- Integration of physical, mental health and social services (including housing and employment) for children and adults with mental health problems;
- Coordination of mental health services with other county systems such as child protection and criminal justice;
- Partnerships between counties and managed care organizations that effectively align funding, authority, responsibility, risk, and reward;
- State funding to assure services for uninsured and underinsured;
- State funding for prevention, screening, and earlier intervention of mental health problems, especially targeted to newborn and early childhood services;
- Flexibility in dedicating local tax dollars for mental health in relation to other social services; and
- Continuation of the state safety net for people with severe mental health problems.

AMC supports a review of the state adult and children's mental health acts to clarify appropriate county responsibilities.



# Public Safety, Corrections and Courts

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AMC supports programs and policies that promote safe communities through effective prevention, education, supervision and treatment, and communication technology, and preparedness through local/state collaboration.

## 9-1-1

- AMC supports a stable and reliable funding source and flexible use of 9-1-1 fees to offset county costs for the upgrades to and maintenance of local 9-1-1 systems.

## Collaboration

- AMC supports a coordinated and efficient law enforcement program between the state and local jurisdictions.
- AMC supports continued and expanded use of the Automated Pawn System (APS) as well as continued authority for regulation of pawn shops at the local government level.

## Communication Interoperability

- AMC supports the statewide system for communication interoperability for emergency management services and law enforcement purposes and supports the ongoing development and implementation of a statewide emergency radio infrastructure.
- AMC supports locally managed emergency communications systems and recognize that the subscriber and equipment operating costs of a statewide infrastructure require state support.
- AMC supports the ongoing development of an integrated state criminal justice information system (CrimNet) with full financial resources for development to be provided by the state.

## Drug Courts

- AMC supports collaboration and cooperation between the counties, state administration, state courts and other stakeholders to address the issue of alcohol and other drug offenders in the criminal justice system.
- AMC recognizes that for a drug court expansion and implementation plan to succeed it must:
  - ▶ Align with an effective service delivery model that recognizes existing state/county relationships.
  - ▶ Avoid redundancy of programs and services and prevent new unfunded mandates to local government.
  - ▶ Provide full, stable, and ongoing state funding for corrections and human services systems delivering services at the county level that is equitable and commensurate with local need;
  - ▶ Require that the financing and supervision of county staff remain with the county;
  - ▶ Maintain the efficient financing and operation of chemical dependency and mental health services within the county;
  - ▶ Adopt evidence-based operating practices and outcome-based funding strategies; and
  - ▶ Use existing information systems to provide treatment and client data necessary to evaluate outcomes.

## **Emergency Management**

- AMC supports county board involvement, shared funding responsibility, and local authority for coordination of emergency management services in cooperation with the federal and state government.
- AMC supports disaster assistance initiatives that aid local governments that recognize the limits on local fiscal resources.
- AMC supports the elimination of barriers to local governments in Minnesota willing to provide disaster assistance in other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The state should provide counties and county officers and employees the same liability protections and immunities that are provided to the state and its employees under the EMAC.

## **Emergency Medical Services**

- AMC supports funding for EMS recruitment and education to replace state revenues lost from decreases in seat belt fines and other sources.

## **Health Care**

- AMC supports federal and state financial and program assistance to relieve counties of the costs of uncompensated medical and dental care provided to inmates of local correctional facilities. This includes funding for preventive and ongoing physical and mental health care services in jails and maintenance of SSI, Veterans benefits, Medical Assistance, and MinnesotaCare.

## **Public Defenders**

- AMC supports full state funding of state public defender services.

## **Supervision**

- AMC supports movement to a single, needs-based state-funding stream for corrections. In the absence of a single probation funding stream. AMC supports increased funding for probation officer salaries through caseload/workload reduction funding as provided for in Minnesota Statutes, in order to maintain core probation services.
- AMC supports the use of state resources to fully compensate counties for the entire cost of housing state offenders.
- AMC supports increased state funding for the operation of corrections programs and county/regional jails.
- AMC supports the integration of evidence-based best practices into the discipline of corrections supervision and decision-making.
- AMC opposes any changes in the state Department of Corrections jail standards for existing facilities that will be a financial burden on counties.
- AMC supports that counties that provide probation services and counties that have contracts with the Minnesota Department of Corrections for probation services should receive the full 50% reimbursement for the cost of salaries and fringe benefits as provided by Minnesota Statute § 244.19, Subdivision 6.
- AMC supports that counties organized under the Community Corrections Act for the provision of probation services have their subsidy, as defined in MN Statutes 401, increased by 60 percent over the current appropriation.

## **Victims Services**

- AMC supports restoration of funding for victims services grants.

# Solid Waste Management

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AMC supports development of local priorities and the provision of cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally sound waste management practices.

## Electronic Waste

- AMC supports legislation to require all public electric generation utilities, cooperative electric associations, and municipal electric utilities to establish an industry-funded system for recycling spent fluorescent and high intensity discharge lamps from households.
- AMC supports efforts to make improvements that would maximize the e-waste recycling program, and the use of any manufacturer payments in lieu of covered electronic device (CED) recycling be used by the state to help reimburse local government unit collectors not receiving service.

## Inverse Condemnation

- AMC opposes “inverse condemnation” legislation that would restrict the ability of local governments to implement organized waste collection.

## Landfill Capacity

- AMC supports the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency working collaboratively with counties on landfill capacity and Certificate of Need.

## Onsite Burning of Municipal Solid Waste

- AMC encourages the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to continue efforts to educate Minnesota residents on the issues associated with onsite burning.
- AMC supports a state level initiative to correct inconsistencies in statutes governing on-site Municipal Solid Waste (household garbage) burning activities.

## Product Stewardship

- AMC supports product stewardship among manufacturers, retailers and consumers, with an emphasis on industry through an Extended Producer Responsibility framework approach, which creates effective producer-led reduction, reuse and recycling programs, to deal with a product’s lifecycle impacts from design through end-of-life management, without relying solely on state and local governments.
- AMC supports maximizing the collection and safe disposal of unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medicines through an internalized pharmaceutical manufacturer financing mechanism that covers the costs of collection, transportation and hazardous waste disposal, and does not rely on state and local government funding.

## Select Committee on Recycling and Environment (SCORE) Funding

- AMC supports increased SCORE funding to counties to administer the recycling programs mandated by the Legislature and reduce the amount of material that is land filled.

## Solid Waste Financing

- AMC supports increased capital assistance project funding.

## Solid Waste Management Tax

- AMC supports allocating 100 percent of the revenue generated by the Solid Waste Management Tax to state and county product stewardship, household hazardous waste, and other waste management activities.

## **Solid Waste Processing Credit**

- AMC supports reinstating the state solid waste processing credit to counties that process waste at waste to energy or compost facilities.

## **Waste Assurance**

- AMC supports legislation to streamline the waste designation process to more effectively exercise the waste assurance tools provided to counties, while retaining the integrity of the public input process.

## **Waste Pesticide Funding**

- AMC supports a fully funded state-wide program to implement comprehensive and accessible disposal of agricultural and residential waste pesticides.

## **Waste to Energy**

- AMC supports the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency working collaboratively with counties on the permitting of new or expansion of existing waste to energy processing facilities.

# **Tax and Finance**

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AMC supports the authority delegated to democratically elected officials to make budget decisions for the unit of government for which they were duly elected. ***AMC supports the current constitutional requirement that the state to adopt a balanced biennial budget and opposes any efforts to alter the constitution on this matter such as a constitutional amendment to authorize continuing resolutions or allowing an expiring biennial budget to continue without legislative action.***

## **Dedicated State Funding/Constitution**

- AMC opposes constitutional amendments that artificially establish guaranteed, perpetual revenue streams for any government programs or spending categories.

## **Delinquencies**

- AMC supports eliminating the statutory minimum and maximum on the interest rate charged on delinquent property taxes and penalties, and supports annually adjusting those interest rates based on a set level above the U.S. Prime rate.

## **Fees**

- AMC supports the use of local fee revenue as an alternative revenue source and as a tool to finance their intended purposes. Statutory fee minimum amounts must be sufficient to cover local program and administrative costs and provide for local discretion for adjustment.

## **Homestead Benefits**

- AMC believes that property tax homestead benefits should be provided through a direct credit or refund to homeowners, rather than market value exclusions or credits.

## **Local Government Revenues and Expenditures**

- AMC supports greater flexibility for counties to diversify their sources of revenue in order to reduce the reliance on the property tax to fund county operations and state mandated services.
- AMC believes that any sales tax revenues raised for the purposes of funding state financial commitments to counties, including grants, aids and credits, should be enacted in a uniform basis on the state level and responsibility for those budget decisions should not be transferred to local governments.

## **Payment in Lieu of Taxes**

- Private lands acquired outside of a city should not be in conflict with the county's comprehensive plan.
- Private land acquisitions must emphasize the greatest level of public value that can be obtained in order to achieve the maximum statewide public benefit.
- AMC strongly supports full funding, including inflationary adjustment, of PILT payments to affected local governments to reduce the financial burden to property tax payers created by a reduced tax base in a county, city or town.

## **Property Tax Reserved for Local Governments**

- AMC supports the principle that individual local governments are best able to determine the appropriate taxing and spending levels for each of their communities. Property taxes are created to finance local government programs and services. The use of the property tax to finance locally determined and delivered services should be considered the exclusive domain of local government. AMC opposes efforts to fund state entities and programs through the county property tax mechanisms.
- AMC supports direct collection of the state general property tax by the department of Revenue while the tax in effect.

## **Reporting**

- AMC supports utilizing contemporary technological tools for the dissemination of required data; for example, amending county financial statement publication requirements so that counties may post reports on county websites.

## **Sales Tax**

- AMC supports requiring online-only retailers to collect and remit state sales taxes.

## **State Aids**

- AMC supports increasing funding for county aid programs to assist the county role in the delivery of increasing state mandated services.
- AMC supports the reinstatement of family preservation aid.
- AMC supports automatically adjusting county program aid for inflation similar to the former HACA program.

## **Taxation of Local Government Purchases**

- AMC supports the exemption of local government purchases from state and local sales and use taxes.

## **Tax Limitation Initiatives**

- AMC supports the ability of the state and its counties to properly fund their operations and opposes any imposition of levy limits or other artificial statutory or constitutional restrictions such as valuation freezes, revenue or spending caps, reverse referenda or other limitations on the budgeting process that undermine the tenets of a representative democracy as established in the Constitution.
- AMC supports excluding the wind production tax and taconite tax from levy aid base calculations.
- AMC supports the current valuation process for sugar mills.

## **Truth-in-Taxation**

- AMC supports changes to the statutory Truth-in-Taxation procedural requirements that would provide more county flexibility, allow counties to more effectively and efficiently use communication technology, and provide for additional reporting of costs and attendance to the state.

# Transportation

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## *Airports, Rail Service and Waterways*

- AMC supports a statewide, integrated multi-modal transportation system that keeps Minnesota competitive in a global marketplace.

### **Funding**

- AMC supports increased funding for the maintenance and development of railroads, airports and waterways as part of an integrated and efficient transportation system including increased state funding for the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program to provide the necessary statewide access to national and international markets.
- AMC supports the restoration of and ongoing full funding for the State Airports Fund to promote regional transportation, economic development and homeland security.

## *Roads and Bridges*

- AMC supports long-term, sustainable funding streams that provide the necessary resources for safe highway and road systems that can efficiently move people and goods.

### **Funding**

- AMC supports transportation funding initiatives that address the long-term transportation needs of counties and the state.
- AMC supports full and ongoing funding for the local bridge program in the form of state general obligation bonding authority to address current financial shortfalls.
- AMC supports increased funding for the Local Road Improvement Program for the Roads of Regional Significance Account and the Rural Road Safety Account.
- AMC supports efforts to capture revenue from all highway users, including electric vehicles.
- AMC supports removing the referendum requirement for the local option transportation sales tax in Greater MN.
- AMC supports giving all counties flexibility to charge a wheelage fee.
- AMC supports full funding for the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program.
- AMC supports the repeal of the sales tax on any county highway purchases.
- AMC opposes increased funding of ATV and snowmobile trails out of the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund until comprehensive studies of both ATV and snowmobile trail needs have been completed and reviewed.
- AMC supports maintaining the narrowly defined set of parameters for which Park Road Account funds are currently authorized.

### **Governance**

- AMC supports partnerships and cooperation with state agencies, associations and other local units of government that advance the transportation interests of citizens and the state.
- AMC supports county approval of municipal and township plats related to ingress, egress and/or Right-of-Way when adjacent to county highways.
- AMC supports removal of local or municipal plan approval for county state aid highway projects.

## **Implements of Husbandry**

- AMC supports establishing maximum axle weights and gross weights for implements of husbandry on public highway bridges.
- AMC supports eliminating the implements of husbandry exemptions for posted bridge weights, authority to be weighed by law enforcement officials, and civil penalties for excess weight.
- AMC supports eliminating the implements of husbandry liability exemption for damage caused by non-weight-related unlawful operation on public highway bridges.

## **Regulations**

- AMC supports policies that operate within the parameters of the current statewide variance process, maintain the MnDOT Commissioner's role in setting speed limits, and do not alter the statewide funding formula for County State Aid Highways.
- AMC supports current rules and statute as it impacts the state design standards that ensure optimal safety and mobility on roads throughout Minnesota.
- AMC supports creating a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation for overweight/oversized vehicles for the purpose of implementing one stop shopping through standard data collection, permit policies and fees.
- AMC supports policies and programs that streamline processes, control cost escalation and recognize diversity among counties.

## **Safety**

- AMC supports electronic and photo monitoring for data collection, traffic planning, driver education, and enforcement as a means of reducing road wear, accidents and injuries.
- AMC supports railroad safety funding via the biennial capital bonding bill to add crossing lights and gates to paved county highway-main line railroad crossings that currently lack safety mechanisms.

## **Ten-Ton Roads**

- AMC supports bonding for the development of a complete statewide ten-ton county state aid highway system that will meet the safety, congestion mitigation, connectivity, agricultural, industrial and economic needs of the state.

## **Weight Limits**

- AMC supports the ability of counties to establish load restrictions on the county roads systems.
- AMC supports the prohibition of any weight limit exemptions except during harvest.
- AMC supports the statewide enforcement, education and prosecution of Minnesota's weight laws.
- AMC supports extending seasonal load limits on gravel roads by two weeks.
- AMC supports increasing the statutorily allowable weight limit for trucks travelling within Minnesota so that trucks with six axels may weigh up to 90,000 pounds and trucks with 7 axles may weigh up to 97,000 pounds with a permit.

## ***Transit***

AMC supports transit systems that provide critical access for commuters and vulnerable citizens.

### **Dedicated Funding**

- AMC supports dedicated transit funding that is both adequate and predictable and provides the necessary revenue to meet the needs of the state and local commuters.
- AMC supports a fair and equitable distribution of revenue for the Greater Minnesota Transit Program with the same policies, patterns and practices.

### **Governance**

- AMC supports partnerships and cooperation with state agencies, associations and other local units of government that advance the transit needs of Minnesota citizens.

### **Transit Modes**

- AMC supports the development of a comprehensive statewide transit plan that considers the proper transit modes for geographic corridors, including passenger rail, and provides strategies to mitigate congestion while also improving access and mobility for all citizens.

# **Vital Communities**

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AMC supports state assistance to communities in reaching their workforce and economic development potential in order to enhance the quality of life for all Minnesotans.

### **Infrastructure**

- AMC supports increased funding of the Greater Minnesota Business Development Infrastructure grant program.
- AMC supports the small cities development program.
- AMC supports ongoing state funding to leverage partnerships that can help limited English proficiency populations successfully integrate into Minnesota communities improving the health, safety and civic engagement of all.

### **Programs and Administration**

- AMC supports increased funding of the Minnesota Investment Fund.
- AMC supports the sales tax exemption for small business equipment at the point of sale instead of as a reimbursement program.
- AMC supports using the occupational employer survey database to determine rural Minnesota wage rates.
- AMC supports funding for the creation of the Office of Entrepreneurship administered by small business development centers across the state.
- AMC supports the levy authority of county EDA's and opposes changes made to 469.1082, subdivision 5 in 2010 that allow for townships to opt-out of participation in economic development efforts within a county.
- AMC supports the redevelopment and rehabilitation of contaminated properties through existing Environmental Response Funds using mortgage deed and registry tax revenues.



# Vulnerable People

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AMC supports state resources and public policy to protect vulnerable people from harm.

## Disabled and Elderly Populations

- AMC supports state policy and financing strategies to support county roles in providing or assuring health and social services and care integration for people with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities.
- AMC supports financing and authority for counties to conduct vulnerable adult investigations.
- AMC supports funding for county services, including administering the MnChoices assessment, to ensure that the vulnerable elderly and disabled populations are served in cost-effective, appropriate settings and at home or in the community whenever possible.

## Financing and Systems

- AMC supports repealing county cost shares for people on Medical Assistance in nursing homes, intermediate care facilities, and institutes for mentally disabled.
- AMC supports repealing county cost shares for people in regional treatment centers and 16-bed hospital facilities.
- AMC supports financing strategies to support activities at the local government level to assure that people with physical, mental or developmental disabilities receive social supports to live at the maximum level of independence.
- AMC supports clarifying and fully funding counties' roles in service delivery for long term care and continuing care services, especially in the areas of quality assurance, assessment/reassessment and provider network development.
- AMC supports aligning licensing regulatory authority with the enforcement and investigative obligation for adult protection reports. AMC supports exempting county lead investigative agencies from responsibility to investigate reports from facilities licensed by the state Department of Human Services or Department of Health.

# Water

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AMC supports efforts to protect and improve the quality of water in Minnesota.

## Aquatic Invasive Species

- AMC supports the continuation and creation of Aquatic Invasive Species programs funded by license fees, the state General Fund and other state funding sources, which are implemented by the DNR and local authorities. AMC supports further restrictions on infested waters, temporary controls, and increased fines.

## Drainage

- AMC supports drainage law that ensures the ability to maintain drainage systems.
- AMC supports requiring the state to fund the costs of drainage management activities that are the result of state mandates.
- AMC supports a statutory change to provide for legal drainage ditch maintenance and repair projects under MN Statute 103E and 103D to be exempt from possible claims under Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MN Stat 116B).

## Drinking Water

- AMC supports efforts to monitor and protect the quality of drinking water supplies in the state.

## **Federal Endangered Species Act**

- AMC supports efforts by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to down list or remove the Topeka Shiner Minnow from the endangered species program. While this effort is underway, AMC requests that the USFWS exempt public works projects from current restrictions where the Topeka Shiner Minnow is present.

## **Impaired Waters**

- AMC supports initiatives to restore Minnesota's impaired waters that:
  - ▶ Prevent waters from becoming impaired.
  - ▶ Primarily rely on voluntary efforts;
  - ▶ Build upon existing programs;
  - ▶ Provide significant opportunities for local governments and citizens to participate in decision-making processes;
  - ▶ Are funded through federal and state revenue sources and not collected through the property tax system; and
  - ▶ Work to prevent the pollution of lakes and rivers.
- AMC supports restoring and increasing state financial support for county water management planning.

## **Storm Water Management**

- AMC supports full funding for the delegation of the NPDES Phase II storm water program to counties that are best able to review, permit, monitor and enforce these requirements.

## **Wetlands**

- AMC supports simplifying state and federal wetland regulatory programs.
- AMC supports the existing policies of WCA and supports the simplifying and streamlining of state and federal wetland regulatory programs.
- AMC supports maintaining WCA as a conservation program rather than a preservation program.
- AMC supports including data from all wetland restoration or creation in the wetland replacement reporting.
- AMC opposes initiatives to identify WCA as a no net loss program.
- AMC opposes large changes to WCA exemptions and administrative procedures without complete data to justify the changes.
- AMC supports maintaining wetland de minimis exemption amounts and simplifying its application.
- AMC opposes the changes made to the Wetland Conservation Act in 2007 and supports reverting to the de minimis exemptions in place in 2006.
- AMC opposes WCA rule changes that require landowners to report exempt activities.
- AMC supports local decision authority for the wetland replacement portion in a permit application to mine.

## **Water Basin Organizations**

- AMC opposes the mandatory membership of an individual watershed to be part of a water basin organization.

## **Water Resource Service Delivery**

- AMC supports county flexibility regarding the delivery of services to conserve land and water resources.