



Alaska State Legislature

Representative Matt Claman

October 2021 Community Council Update

Legislatures Passes Appropriations Bill — In September, the legislature passed [House Bill 3003](#) which funds an \$1,100 permanent fund dividend for the second time this year after the governor previously vetoed the dividend. I am pleased the legislature supported funding for an affordable dividend without overdrawing the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve. HB 3003 also includes \$16 million in federal aid for COVID pandemic responses (including more public health nurses), \$4.8 million for renewable energy projects, \$10.5 million for tourism marketing, and restores funding the governor had vetoed from Alaska Legal Services Corporation. The governor has since signed the bill into law.

HB 3003 appropriates funds from the General Fund and the Statutory Budget Reserve (SBR) to pay for the dividend. The SBR is typically swept into another state savings account, but as we discussed in [a previous e-newsletter](#), the Alaska Superior Court ruled against the governor in *Alaska Federation of Natives v. Dunleavy* and specified the SBR would be available to spend. Prior to approval of HB 3003 by the legislature, based on the superior court's decision, the governor flip-flopped his position on higher education programs, including WWAMI, and those programs are now funded for the current fiscal year. The governor also reversed his initial position on the SBR funds by agreeing that they were not swept.

After passage of HB 3003, [the governor called the legislature back for a fourth special session](#).

Redistricting Public Comment Period — Under Alaska's constitution, a five-member board (comprised of members appointed by the governor, the legislature, and the Alaska Supreme Court) must redraw the boundaries of Alaska's 40 legislative districts after every census. After the U.S. Census Bureau released the [2020 data](#) in August, the [Alaska Redistricting Board](#) began its work. Alaska's Constitution lays out criteria for drawing maps, which do not include any consideration of protecting incumbents or favoring one political party or other:

- Low population deviation: Ideally, every district would have the exact same number of people. In practice, that's not possible, so the maps should minimize population deviation.
- Compactness: Shorter total circumference of a district is more compact.
- Socioeconomic integration: Consistency in types of communities in a district; note that case law means in practice, all areas within a borough are "integrated" for this purpose (so there's no legal basis to dispute Anchorage districts crossing Community Council lines). Within boroughs/municipalities, compactness and deviation are the key metrics. Consideration may be given to local government boundaries and geographic features.
- Contiguity: House districts must also be contiguous
- Pairings: Contiguous House districts pair to make Senate districts.

The process for redistricting is ongoing. You may provide public testimony via email at testimony@akredistrict.org or by [webform](#) until the board selects the final map on **November 10, 2021**. Interactive maps and PDF files for all plans [have been posted to the map gallery](#).

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