



Alaska State Legislature

Senator Matt Claman

Senator.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov

(907) 269-0130

Serving West Anchorage

September 2023 Community Council Update

Legislature Passes Budget — As we reported in June, the legislature passed a budget that does not overdraw the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve Account, does not draw from savings accounts, and includes a \$1,304 dividend. The approved versions of the budget contain approximately \$14.3 billion in total spending: \$6 billion came from the state's unrestricted general fund; \$968 million the designated general funds, and \$5.3 billion in federal spending. \$2.4 billion remains in the Constitutional Budget Reserve. The state's operating budget is approximately \$11.4 billion — with \$5.6 billion from the unrestricted general fund — while the capital budget is \$2.7 billion with \$369 million from the unrestricted general fund.

Sponsored Legislation— My office sponsored several pieces of legislation moving through the legislature. SB 53 will ensure that individuals who have committed violent crimes for which they cannot be tried in the criminal system, due to a finding of incompetency, are transitioned seamlessly to the civil system for evaluation for civil commitment. SB 91 proposes telehealth options for individuals with life-threatening illnesses to receive care from out-of-state multidisciplinary care team. And SB 127 requires vehicle rental platform companies, such as Turo, to collect the existing state vehicle rental tax and remit the tax to the Department of Revenue (DOR) on behalf of vehicle owners.

Passed Legislation — The legislature passed important pieces of legislation that were signed into law this summer, including:

- *SB 58: Medicaid Postpartum Expansion* – Medicaid coverage has been expanded for new mothers from 60 days to 12 months. Postpartum coverage for new mothers reduces maternal mortality rates and provides better support for mothers dealing with post-partum depression. Improved health for mothers is directly related to increased care and better health for infants and children. The Alaska Maternal Child Death Review Committee recommended this change in 2018. In 2020, the American Rescue Plan Act added the option for states to extend postpartum coverage from 60 days to 12 months for eligible beneficiaries for a temporary period. The 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act made the extension option permanent.
- *SB 48: Carbon Offset Program* – Alaska is enabled to pursue a carbon offset program, including leasing state lands to private parties for the purpose of carbon offset management and allowing the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to pursue its own carbon offset projects on state land. I am pleased to serve on the Senate Resources Committee. The Committee thoroughly reviewed SB 48. During the amendment process for SB 48, I sponsored an amendment that set a limit for the state when engaging in third-party contracts for carbon offset projects. This limit clarifies that under commission-based contracts with third-party entities for carbon offset projects, the cost to the state of the contract may not exceed 30 percent of the revenue generated by the project.