



# Association of Minnesota Counties

## Legislative Policy Positions 2024

Approved December 6, 2023



*AMC unites Minnesota's counties to  
achieve public service excellence.*

AMC strives to **preserve local control** so that counties have the flexibility to address the most pressing needs of their communities.

AMC supports state budget **solutions that avoid adding or shifting a disproportionate burden** to counties through cost shifts, cost shares and unfunded mandates.

AMC believes that **funding for county-administered services** should be **commensurate with the level of service or results** deemed acceptable.

# Table of Contents

---

Broadband Development	- 1 -
Chemical Use and Abuse	- 1 -
Child Safety and Well Being	- 2 -
Children’s and Family Health	- 3 -
Community Health	- 3 -
County Administration and Management	- 4 -
Disease Prevention and Health Protection	- 8 -
Economic Self-Sufficiency	- 9 -
Energy	- 10 -
Environmental Protection	- 10 -
Health Care Financing, Access and Quality	- 11 -
Human Services Delivery	- 12 -
Land Use Planning and Regulation	- 13 -
Mandates	- 15 -
Mental Health	- 15 -
Public Safety, Corrections and Courts	- 16 -
Solid Waste Management	- 19 -
Tax and Finance	- 21 -
Transportation	- 23 -
Vulnerable People	- 27 -
Water	- 28 -

# Broadband Development

---

## Broadband

- AMC supports identifying and implementing actions to achieve by 2026 the goal of statewide deployment of advanced broadband networks and symmetrical high-speed capacity.
- AMC supports initiatives to make it easier for counties, 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 removing barriers to the exercise of local authority to provide such services, including repeal of Minn. Stat. § 237.19, the requires a supermajority voter approval for the provision of local phone service by a local unit of government, and clarifying county and state bonding authority.
- AMC supports funding for the Office of Broadband Development within the Department of Employment and Economic Development.
- AMC supports continued funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Fund.
- AMC supports a coordinated statewide effort to enhance access to services across Minnesota through telepresence. Strengthening telepresence can maximize the use of existing workforce resources and increase access for citizens, while improving efficiency for healthcare, social service and public health providers. A coordinated approach should include collaboration with both public and private entities and should involve health and human services agencies, courts, law enforcement, schools and other disciplines.
- AMC supports efforts to increase broadband affordability and digital equity.

# Chemical Use and Abuse

---

## 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 for counties to continue to work in key areas of chemical dependency prevention, screening, treatment and aftercare, probation supervision and detoxification services.
- AMC supports state funding for mandated detoxification services.
- AMC supports the implementation and enforcement of statewide policies that restrict the production, sale and possession of illegal synthetic drugs.
- AMC supports state and local policies that prevent underage alcohol and tobacco consumption.

## Tobacco

- AMC supports continued state funding to counties to prevent tobacco use and other youth risk behavior.
- AMC supports legislation that would provide stricter regulation of e-cigarettes and flavored tobacco.
- AMC supports the use of recovered tobacco settlement dollars for public health prevention activities.
- 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.

# Child Safety and Well Being

---

AMC supports a child welfare system designed to keep children safe and with their families. The system should be structured to reduce the disproportionate impact on communities of color, offer services aimed at preventing maltreatment and strengthening families, and foster collaboration between public services and communities.

## Child Safety

- AMC supports stable, adequate state funding for child safety and well-being. This funding is intended to:
  - ▶ Prevent child abuse and neglect.
  - ▶ Allow caseworkers to have manageable caseloads so adequate assessment and services can be provided to meet the safety needs of children.
  - ▶ 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.
  - ▶ Assure that parents have enhanced capacity to provide for children's needs.
  - ▶ Support school educational stability for foster children and county-involved youth by stabilizing their access to transportation supports when they are placed in settings outside of their original school districts.
- AMC supports addressing educational neglect with a child welfare response and required connection with early intervention services and removing educational neglect from the child protection statutes.
- AMC supports counties, Tribal Nations & the state, to strive to meet both the letter and spirit of ICWA. This will be accomplished through a collaborative process that identifies and addresses any concerns in an ongoing, real-time process, through strengthening relationships and communication.
- AMC supports the policy that all child placement orders issued by tribal courts become the financial responsibility of the state.
- AMC fully supports legislation that directs all responsibility for providing Child Protection/Child Welfare services for children living within the boundaries of the Red Lake Trust Lands to the Red Lake Nation.
- AMC supports the policy that all ICWA child placement costs 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

---

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

## Two-Generation Approach

- AMC supports multi-generational, whole family policy strategies that address intergenerational poverty.
- AMC supports legislation that allows a local unit of government to pilot a children's savings account that will support two-generational disparity reduction efforts.

## Maternal and Child Health

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

## Systems

- AMC supports state funding for locally-based collaborative activities across systems and 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).
- 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.
- AMC supports federal funding for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) grant as well as continuation of adjunctive eligibility for WIC programs.
- AMC supports state and federal policies that authorize additional flexibility and the use of televisits (phone or video) for clients in Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programming when needed.
- AMC supports legislation that aligns the Minnesota Health Records Act with HIPPA for efficient data-sharing between educational and safety net programs, as well as state and local public health to connect residents to appropriate services and interventions for improved service delivery and outcomes.

# Community Health

---

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

- AMC supports permanent, dedicated funding sufficient to assure implementation of the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) initiatives throughout the state.
- AMC supports funding to counties and local partners to address the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Adverse Community Environments (The Pair of Aces), health equity, and Social Determinants of Health, that predispose children to these adverse experiences.
- AMC supports state funding for home and community-based care.
- 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.

# County Administration and Management

---

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.

## *Condemnation and 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.
- AMC supports changing the condemnation process to require property owners, in cases where negotiations have failed to reach agreement and the property owner has hired an appraiser, to disclose their appraisal prior to the deadline for the governmental agency to make its final written offer, or in the alternative, submission of the owner's appraisal 30 days before a condemnation commissioners' hearing, thus giving the same right of full disclosure to both parties and providing the agency with crucial information in order to formulate its offers and reach settlement.

## *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.

## *Election Administration*

- AMC supports federal and state funding commensurate with the cost for counties to comply with voting requirements, 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 infusing new money into the newly created Voting, Operations, Technology, and Election Resources (VOTER) Account to assist counties in administering election related duties.
- 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 supports the restoration of voting rights for individuals who are not incarcerated.
- AMC supports expanding population thresholds for counties who choose to implement mail balloting.
- AMC asks that the legislature continue to support the reimbursement mechanism for presidential primary election that fully accounts for county costs.
- AMC supports legislation granting counties the authority to fill mid-term vacancies in county sheriff, attorney, or row officer positions either through a special election or by appointing a replacement until the next regular election.

# ***Employment and Employee Benefits***

## **County Workforce**

- AMC encourages flexibility in the delivery of county-administered programs to help maximize investments in staff while maintaining quality services. Potential ways to address workforce shortages could include the ability to establish partnerships, employ technology, or modify mandated services.
- AMC advocates for reducing policy barriers to attracting or retaining county workers.
- AMC supports efforts to attract and retain volunteer, community drivers by modifying state statute to clarify that volunteers receiving reimbursement from government entities would not be required to purchase commercial insurance.

## **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 the state granting authority to counties for pooling retirees separately from active employees for purposes of establishing premiums and coverage for hospital, medical, and dental insurance.
- 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.
- AMC supports removing the requirement that local governments allow early retirees and their dependents to stay on the county's hospital, medical and dental plans indefinitely. If this requirement remains in effect, AMC supports the state granting authority to counties to pool the retiree group separately from active employees.
- AMC supports modifying MS 62A.21, subdivision 2a to put in place reasonable limitations and requirements for continued health insurance coverage for divorced spouses.
- AMC supports changes to MS 471.6161 so that the public employer and exclusive representative of the employees of an appropriate bargaining unit must meet and confer over any proposed changes in group insurance contracts.
- AMC supports efforts to address increased duty disability trends by providing public safety personnel and first responders with an array of mental health supports aimed at getting individuals the care they need to safely return to work.
- AMC supports the state providing full and ongoing funding to pay for state-mandated continued health insurance costs for public safety officers disabled in the line of duty under MS 299A.465.

## **Pensions**

- AMC believes that any structural changes to PERA should promote long-term sustainability of the pension fund and be representative of potential costs to taxpayers, marketability of the pension benefit, and consideration of active employees in addition to retirees.
- Counties strongly support efforts to strengthen the financial health and sustainability of Public Employee Retirement Association (PERA) defined benefit plans. Costs associated with any benefit changes, changes to plan structure, or actuarial assumptions must be shared equally between the employees and employers. Any state funding provided to offset current or future costs associated with changes to benefits, the plan structure or actuarial assumptions should provide equal benefit to employees and employers across all affected plans.
- 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.
- AMC supports increasing the existing earnings threshold for mandatory PERA membership and setting the threshold at an annual earnings level.



## **Prevailing Wage**

- AMC supports removing the prevailing wage requirement for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program, and to allow non-Minnesota based COOPs to apply for the grant as long as the project is located in Minnesota and the program is continued.

## **Long-Term Care**

- AMC supports granting county employees and their spouses the eligibility to voluntarily purchase group rate long-term care insurance through the Minnesota Public Employee Long Term Care Insurance Plan.
- AMC supports lawmakers working together to modify our State's Medicaid reimbursement system to increase rates, tying them to wage increases for employees, to help providers better respond to evolving labor market demands in the caregiving workforce.

## **Veteran's Preference**

- AMC believes that current veteran's preference law provides sufficient preference for veterans applying for public sector employment and promotions, and opposes increasing the preference points given to applicants or employees seeking promotions.

## **Workers' Compensation**

- AMC supports adding a designated public sector employer representative to the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council.

## **Intergovernmental Relations**

### **District Courts**

- AMC supports efforts to assist counties in funding and operating facilities for District Courts, court administration, and court security.

### **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 take over 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.

### **State Audits**

- AMC supports current state law granting rights for all counties to issue request for proposals for audit services and contract with the entity that best fits the needs of the county and its taxpayers.

### **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.



## ***Libraries***

- AMC supports greater flexibility for libraries to form regional partnerships.
- AMC supports legislation that would provide for investments in the Statewide Regional Library System by increasing funding for regional library basic system support aid.
- 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.
- AMC supports expanding flexibility for counties to accept certain documents or signatures electronically both during and after a public health emergency.
- AMC supports the examination of the increased work for Deputy Registrars and Driver's License Agents as well as the appropriate level of compensation/filing fees in completing these duties as determined by the legislative study.
- AMC supports equitable split of fees, workload and expenses between counties and state to provide quality in-person access to services for all residents of the state. AMC supports DNR title and registration Deputy Filing Fee increases from \$4.50 to \$8.00 on registration renewals and from \$7.00 to \$12.00 on all title applications and transfers of registration on vehicles titled and registered by the DNR. AMC supports a local office surcharge to be collected on all on-line and mail-in transactions processed by the state. Collected surcharge to be disbursed to deputy registrar offices on an annual basis.

## ***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.
- AMC supports legislation that promotes pre-administrative filing remedies for UCC filings in an effort to protect any individual, entity or elected official from the filing of false liens against them.

## ***Tax Forfeiture/Foreclosure***

- AMC supports revisions to Minnesota's tax forfeiture laws that respond to the U.S. Supreme Court Case Tyler v. Hennepin County and honor the county values outlined under the AMC Tax Forfeiture Work Group. Any legislative solution should include state payment for the costs associated with forthcoming class action lawsuits as well as funding to assist counties with managing and cleaning up properties.

## ***Technology & Artificial Intelligence***

- 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.
- AMC supports that the State of Minnesota reevaluate and map accordingly the establishments of county boundaries for the purposes of accuracy and proper property taxation and recording of deeds.
- AMC supports and prioritizes greater collaboration between counties and state agencies on cybersecurity efforts including security event monitoring and incident response.
- AMC supports reducing overall costs through greater collaboration between government entities including agency-sponsored, county-managed systems.
- AMC supports creating a state-driven AI data warehouse to use across state and local governments as well as analytics to help with forecasting.

- AMC supports convening a state and local government working group with the intention of creating comprehensive AI use policies.

## Disease Prevention and Health Protection

---

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 increased 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.
- AMC supports restoration of federal funding to local public health for emergency preparedness and response.

### 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, and use of telehealth.
- AMC supports the use of scientific evidence as a basis for agency action and other decision-making about vaccine safety and other health practices.
- AMC supports state-level funding resources directed to COVID-19 response including but not limited to community education and outreach, case investigation and contact tracing, testing, delivery of essential services, and distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine when it is available.

### 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 and in-home asthma prevention and treatment interventions including coverage of products that reduce asthma triggers, and referral to follow-up educational services.
- AMC supports legislation that streamlines Minnesota's food safety system to eliminate licensing authority complexity of food operations and remove barriers for starting food businesses.

### Public Health Infrastructure

- AMC supports restoring and increasing flexible 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.
- AMC supports the efficient and secure sharing of data between the state and local public health agencies for the assessment of local health status and supports cross-sector data sharing to best assess trends.

# Economic Self-Sufficiency

---

AMC supports state funding and policy to strengthen the public safety net for those unable to work and to remove disincentives that discourage able-bodied people from achieving self-sufficiency.

## Affordable Housing

- Secure individual and family stability and prevent homelessness by assuring the reimbursement rates and state funding allow all counties to sustain and grow housing support services.
- 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 a regional approach to eliminating unsheltered homelessness statewide.

## 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.
- AMC supports additional state funding to address the waitlist for child care support for eligible families.

## Income Supports/Work Readiness

- AMC supports state funding to counties and other organizations to eliminate employment disparities in Minnesota's ethnic, racial, refugee, and low-income populations, including to support interpreter services, and language education strategies to improve access to employment services and workforce training, and for capacity building to assist small and diverse businesses to achieve equitable access to public and private business opportunities.
- 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 and opposes the counting of that income against MFIP support calculations.
- 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 programs.
- AMC supports innovations to simplifying the process of determining eligibility for and enrollment in income support programs.
- 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 the Department of Human Services and County workgroup definition of self-employment income in order to determine eligibility for public programs.

# Energy

---

AMC recognizes there is an ever-increasing need to provide efficient, affordable, clean, renewable and sustainable energy to the people of Minnesota. AMC supports legislation and policies that would help make this possible.

## Energy Conservation

- AMC supports methods of energy conservation, improving efficiency, and minimizing the environmental impacts of all methods of energy production, including but not limited to coal; petroleum; natural gas; nuclear; wind; solar; hydropower; geothermal, wood; waste; methane; ethanol and bio-diesel.

## Energy Exploration

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

## Energy Independence

- AMC supports well researched, data-based strategies toward the development and implementation of a comprehensive energy independence program.
- AMC supports repealing the prohibition on building nuclear energy facilities.
- AMC supports adding the availability of E85 (ethanol) to the MNDOT highway signage programs.
- 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.

## Energy Transmission and Distribution

- AMC supports greater cooperation and communication between the state, local units of government and private industry for the siting.

# Environmental Protection

---

## Chronic Wasting Disease

- AMC encourages the Legislature, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Minnesota Board of Animal Health to enact a comprehensive plan to slow or eliminate the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease.

## Noxious and Invasive Species Management

- AMC supports State funding to provide financial assistance for County Agricultural Inspectors (CAI) to carry out duties as described in the Noxious Weed Law, as well as assist landowners with control of noxious weeds.
- 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.
- AMC supports legislation providing state funding to aid counties for planning and response to the loss of trees due to Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive pests and pathogens.

## Native Species Management

- AMC supports establishing recreational harvest limits and spawning protection for native “rough” fish species of Minnesota that are ecologically beneficial.

# Health Care Financing, Access and Quality

---

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. AMC supports the equal treatment of mental health conditions and substance use disorders in insurance plans. 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 the funding necessary for the Minnesota Eligibility Technology System (METS) to function properly and reliably, and alleviate excessive burdens on taxpayers and improve services provided to customers.
- 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 default assignment of enrollees to the county-based purchasing plan if an enrollee does not make a choice of health plan.
- AMC supports re-shaping the state-county relationship related to County-Based Purchasing (CBP) consistent with AMC's policy position for Joint Powers Agreements.
- AMC supports creating a new chapter of state law for County-Based Purchasing (CBP) recognizing County-Based Purchasing as an alternative model for delivery of Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP).
- AMC supports fully empowering counties that elect County-Based Purchasing (CBP) for delivery of Minnesota Health Care Programs (MHCP) as provided for in state law (256B.692) through direct procurement arrangements with the MN Department of Human Services (DHS).
- AMC supports federal legislative changes or waivers necessary to allow for direct procurement and full implementation of state CBP laws (256B.692).
- AMC opposes fragmentation of services provided by County-Based Purchasing (CBPs) through benefit carve-outs or other policies that reduce the scope of CBP services.

## Other County Health Models

- AMC supports default assignment of enrollees to the county-operated plans if an enrollee does not make a choice of health plan.
- AMC supports other forms of county-operated plans, including default assignment to county-operated plans if an enrollee does not make a choice of health plan and direct procurement arrangements with DHS. AMC supports necessary changes to state and federal law to enable the full range of county-operated plan models that work for each Minnesota county.
- AMC opposes fragmentation of services provided by county-operated plans through benefit carve-outs or other policies that reduce the scope of county-operated plan services.

## Dental

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

## Financing, Administration and Systems

- AMC supports maintaining the state's health care provider tax.
- 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 legislation that would require field tests of any new technology system prior to statewide implementation.
- AMC supports maintaining health insurance coverage for low income Minnesotans. AMC opposes approaches 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 and redetermining eligibility for and enrollment in Minnesota Health Care Programs.
- AMC supports a statewide managed care procurement process that is transparent and reflects a county voice in the outcomes and provides a fair and unbiased process for appeal. The procurement process should not lead to barriers to implement county-based solutions such as county-based purchasing.
- 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 also supports strong and clear collaboration with counties as the system moves from final development to implementation.
- AMC supports maximizing federal revenues to support Minnesota's health care programs.

## Human Services Delivery

---

- AMC recognizes that a true, long-range, transformational approach to redesigning how the Department of Human Services delivers services is vital to meeting the needs for Minnesota residents. As the state embarks on this transformational change, it will be important to look at best practices from other states, convene a panel of systems transformational advisors from private and non-profit sectors, and work closely with counties who have long been the state's key partners in delivering services to Minnesotans.



# Land Use Planning and Regulation

---

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

## Agricultural Land Preservation Program

- AMC supports reform of rural Minnesota Agricultural Land Preservation Program to reduce the time required to withdraw parcels from the program from eight (8) years to three (3) years.

## 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.

## Environmental Review

- AMC supports a statutory clarification of the definition of "cumulative potential effects".
- AMC supports maintaining the existing EAW decision 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.
- 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.
- AMC supports a thoughtful and balanced approach to issues that impact environmental protection and economic development efforts. AMC shall work to ensure that county perspectives are included in the state's response to the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa's application to the Environmental Protection Agency for Class 1 Air Quality designation.
- AMC supports requiring project/site specific meetings for the purpose of gathering public testimony be held in the project/site county or within sixty miles of the project/site location.

## 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 fully funding the beaver damage control grant program under Minnesota Statute 103F.950 to provide grants to local units of government.
- AMC supports permissive authority for a county to designate an employee or employees to carry and discharge a firearm for the purpose of taking a nuisance animal.
- AMC supports legislation to address the expenses counties incur for the clean-up and maintenance requirements of blighted or environmentally contaminated tax forfeiture properties.
- AMC supports state and federal funding to effectively manage and maintain all state and federally owned lands.
- AMC supports the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Strategic Land Asset Management (SLAM) concept and the involvement of counties in the development of land management goals and strategies.
- AMC supports requiring that county boards be notified of, and allowed to comment on, applications for state-funded acquisition projects that are proposed in the county.
- AMC supports maximizing the greatest level of public value and benefit when private lands are acquired with state funds. These lands shall provide multiple uses and are best identified with local government participation throughout the acquisition process.
- 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.
- AMC supports more effective laws to reduce the frequency and severity of accidental dog trapping incidents.

### **Rulemaking**

- AMC opposes opening the shore land 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 a statewide initiative to require 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.
- AMC supports options to expedite the certification of SSTS professionals by addressing training accessibility and testing deficiencies.

### **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.

### **Underground Utility Mapping**

- AMC supports reducing the risks of water and environmental contamination and improving public safety when work is being done near underground utility infrastructure by establishing a method for public and private sector utility providers in Minnesota to share data on underground utility infrastructure in a secure and confidential manner, which will be used to create an accurate inventory of Minnesota's underground utility infrastructure.

# Mandates

---

## 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 believes the Legislature should enact legislation that would sunset all county mandates over a period of time and review each mandate during that period to determine if the mandate should continue or if it should be eliminated. AMC believes the Legislature should prepare a “local impact note” for all legislation that may increase local government costs, and should have ample opportunity to review that analysis before passing any legislation that may increase local government costs.
- AMC supports funding for a state office of suicide prevention.
- AMC supports the ability for counties to self-certify their own merit system if the system meets existing federal requirements. AMC further believes the Department of Human Services should provide for an efficient, streamlined, and transparent process for withdrawal from the Minnesota Merit System which will not impact the cost or services to counties remaining in Minnesota Merit.
- AMC recognizes and promotes the importance of pay equity at all levels of county employment. Any state reporting mandates should be succinct, cognizant of staff time/costs, and void of redundant annual data sets.

# Mental Health

---

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. AMC also supports strong and clear collaboration with counties for offender release programs.
- AMC opposes cost shifts to local governments for sex offenders released from the Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP). AMC supports the expansion of pilot programs in Minnesota to expedite timelines of competency examinations and competency proceedings and explore alternatives to restoration for individuals who lack the capacity to be restored.

## 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 that fully covers the cost of delivering services;
- State funding for prevention, screening, and earlier intervention of mental health problems, especially targeted to newborn and early childhood services;
- Dedicating all funds paid by counties for clients that do not meet medical criteria to build out the current Minnesota mental health system - this revenue stream should be investing in stabilizing existing beds and care options and/or increasing our state's capacity to meet needs across the full mental health continuum of care;
- 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 statewide implementation of best practices for individuals with mental health and substance abuse disorders who are involved in the criminal justice system. Planning and administering a comprehensive approach should bring together personnel from human services personnel, corrections, and courts.
- AMC supports a review of the state adult and children's mental health acts to clarify appropriate county responsibilities.

## **Suicide**

- AMC supports all efforts working toward the goal of zero suicides in Minnesota.
- AMC supports funding for a state office of suicide prevention.

# **Public Safety, Corrections and Courts**

---

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 and Statewide Emergency Communication Interoperability**

- AMC supports a stable and reliable funding source and flexible use of 9-1-1 fees to offset county costs for maintenance of local 9-1-1 systems and for modernization of the systems to integrate Next Generation 911, text-to-911 and other potential advancements in technology.
- 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 communications infrastructure, including, but not limited to, the ARMER system and interoperable data communication systems.
- 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 (CJIS), including the goal of statewide interoperability of records and data systems, with full financial resources for development to be provided by the state.
- AMC supports dedicated funding for current County Geographic Information System mapping efforts related to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) rollout. AMC also supports ongoing, dedicated funding to meet future cybersecurity and infrastructure needs of NG911.

## **Prevention, Intervention and Diversion Programs**

- AMC supports the ability for counties to expand and operate diversion programs, including juvenile detention alternatives, traffic diversion, and other programs that will reduce the contact with the judicial and broader criminal justice system with the goals of better using limited resources, reducing collateral consequences of criminal justice involvement, and reducing racial disparities in the system.
- AMC supports expanded prevention and early interventions efforts that will reduce contact with the criminal justice system.

## 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; including emergency management readiness grants for local planning and preparedness.
- AMC supports increased funding for the local disaster assistance program to assist local governments recover from disasters that do not reach the federal threshold, but result in extreme hardships, AND to minimize the need for future special sessions of the legislature to provide State matching funds when a Presidential declaration is issued. AMC supports a guaranteed minimum pass-through of Emergency Management Performance Grant funds to counties and cities of the first class, and an increase legislative funding for the division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to make their budget less reliant on grant funding that should be coming to counties.
- AMC supports legislation requiring railroads to provide county and city of the first class Emergency Management Agencies and first responders with complete emergency plans that can be used to develop and improve local Emergency Operations Plans.
- AMC supports efforts to implement and expand multi-lingual communication platforms statewide to enhance Minnesota's emergency response system.

## Emergency Medical Services

- AMC supports a comprehensive review of funding for Regional EMS Boards and EMS recruitment and education in order 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 Social Security Insurance, Veterans benefits, Medical Assistance, and MinnesotaCare.

## Law Enforcement and Public Safety 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.
- AMC supports legislation to allow first responders to display more highly visible lighting that more clearly indicates that traffic should clear the path for the responder when responding to an emergency call.

- AMC supports efforts to curb the dangers of distracted driving by supporting legislation that requires hands-free cell phone use while driving.
- AMC supports increased resources for development of programs, partnerships, monitoring and data collection systems, and other initiatives that build cross-system collaborations between law enforcement, social services, corrections, and other departments to provide mental health and substance use interventions and services that reduce negative contact with the criminal justice system.

## Public Defenders

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

## Supervision

- AMC supports full funding of the community supervision formula.
- AMC supports the use of state resources to fully compensate counties for the entire cost of housing state offenders.
- AMC supports a state funding process for the construction and operation of county/regional jails and other corrections programs.
- 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 eliminating life without parole as a sentencing option for children and supports just and age appropriate accountability measures for children that will ensure that every child, regardless of offense, is given meaningful opportunity to obtain release based on demonstrated maturing and rehabilitation. AMC support legislation, that applies both retroactively and prospectively, that abolishes life without parole for children and provides them with meaningful and periodic sentencing reviews, so that no child is allowed to have their human rights violated because of when they were sentenced.

## Victims Services

- AMC supports full state funding of victims' services.

## Public Safety Systems Change

- AMC supports initiatives that provide neutral, data-based evaluation of Minnesota's public safety system and provide policy recommendations that increase the return on investment in the public safety sector.
- AMC supports continuous improvement of the bail system that balances equity and public safety.

## 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.
- AMC supports legislation that would amend the Minnesota Data Practices Act (Minn. Stat. 13.04, subd.4) to restrict or modify the ability to challenge accuracy or completeness of employee performance evaluations through a contested-case proceeding before an Administrative Law Judge.

Government transparency and access to public data are cornerstones of a functioning democracy. AMC supports the current general county retention guidelines reviewed and accepted by the Minnesota Historical Society. Any legislative proposal to change retention policies should include compensation, or means for compensation, for increased storage, technology costs, and staff time.

# Solid Waste Management

---

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

## Closed Landfill Program

- AMC supports full funding and preservation of the closed landfill program (CLP), including both the Closed Landfill Investment Fund (CLIF) and the Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust (MLCAT). Additionally, AMC supports prohibiting the use of these funds for non-landfill related uses, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 115B.39-115B.444, in order to generate a sufficient fund balance to address the needs of closed landfills throughout Minnesota in the future.

## Construction and Demolition Debris Land Disposal Facilities

- AMC supports requiring the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to issue, and/or reissue, all demolition land disposal facility permits in accordance with the MPCA's 2005 Guidance Document until such guidelines are otherwise modified by new rule or statute.
- AMC supports construction and demolition rules that weigh economic and social impacts along with the environmental impacts and supports full state funding to address any C&D management and facility transitions required by state law or rule.

## 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 amending the electronic recycling law to increase manufacturer provided and funded, convenient electronics recycling services throughout Minnesota, thereby assuring the burden for managing discarded electronic products does not fall on local government.

## Landfill Capacity and Certificate of Need

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

## Legislative Solid Waste Committee

- AMC supports the establishment of a bi-partisan, bi- cameral committee to address solid waste related issues.

## Market Development

- AMC supports coordinated statewide market development for materials recoverable from waste, including efforts to create commodity markets for material otherwise found in waste. AMC supports state economic development funding to support businesses that use recovered materials.

## 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.

## Organized Collection/Inverse Condemnation

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



## Organics

- AMC supports state promotion and funding of food waste prevention and diversion of food scraps and other organics from the MSW stream, and to resolve permitting and other issues to facilitate expansion of composting and other organic management facilities and methods.

## PFAS Response

- AMC supports state actions to address PFAS in our environment through producer responsibility. If additional resources are necessary to address this issue of general statewide significance, state resources should be used, rather than shifting the cost to counties.

## 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 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 that does not rely on state and local government funding.

## Recycling Definition - Glass

- AMC supports the use of crushed glass in the construction of roads and in the construction and operation of MSW landfills; this use is considered recycling and included in SCORE goals.

## Recyclable Materials

- AMC supports the state providing monetary incentives for reclaiming recyclable materials from wastes deposited at processing and disposal facilities, which moves the management of these materials higher on the solid waste management hierarchy.

## Resource Recovery Facilities

- AMC supports a county's ability to perform its solid waste management responsibilities as required by Minnesota Statutes Chapters 400 and 473 without prohibitions and restrictions that prevent responsible local handling of waste. This includes ensuring the viability of resource recovery facilities, which support the state's solid waste management hierarchy and help counties provide an effective, efficient, and environmentally focused waste management system for all residents.

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

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

## 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.
- AMC supports a rate reduction, tax credit or similar recognition of the increased tax impacts of the Solid Waste Management Tax in counties that operate processing facilities placing them higher on the solid waste hierarchy.



## 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

---

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.***

## Aggregate Tax

- AMC supports allowing eligible counties to set their local aggregate tax at a level deemed appropriate by the county board and supports raising or eliminating statutory maximums on the tax.

## Assessment

- AMC supports allowing Assessors alternative methods of verifying property information, other than actually viewing a property, when certain conditions are met regarding the historical site visits and existing county records.
- AMC supports the state of Minnesota providing financial compensation to all units of local government for court ordered refunds due to state determined values or state required assessment practices.

## 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.

## Mortgage Registration and Deed Tax

- AMC supports a more equitable distribution of the mortgage registration and deed tax, revenue sources disproportionately benefiting the state general fund for a service completely provided for and by county employees and county resources.

## Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

- 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 along with finding solutions to reduce the volatility of PILT acquired acres reassessments.
- AMC supports the creation of a sustainable PILT funding mechanism which would promote sustainability and guarantee recovery of lost property tax revenue for state-funded land purchases.

## Production Taxes

- AMC opposes changes to the wind and solar production tax which would negatively affect a county's tax base, create confusion in the assessment process, or place undue burdens on host communities.

## 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 supports direct collection of the state general property tax by the department of Revenue while the tax remains in effect.

## Reporting and Public Notices

- 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.
- AMC supports working with local government partners and newspaper associations to identify and modernize state publication statutes to be more reflective of current times and meaningful for readership.
- AMC supports establishing a uniform deadline for all taxing authorities to certify proposed property tax levies of September 30.

## Sales Tax

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

## State Aids

- AMC supports the state providing additional funding to County Program Aid along with an AMC-supported revision to the formula to address funding inadequacies and volatility.
- AMC supports a legislative study to address increasing human services costs through additional state aid programs, outside County Program Aid, that help to alleviate property tax burdens.
- AMC supports the reinstatement of family preservation aid.
- AMC supports automatically adjusting county program aid for inflation similar to the former HACA program.

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

- AMC believes the Legislature should modify the TIF housing district income qualification level requirements to allow the levels to vary according to individual communities.

## **Taxation of Local Government Purchases**

- AMC supports extending the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax exemption to cover local government purchases of road maintenance vehicles.
- AMC supports clarifying the process for counties to utilize the sales tax exemption on material purchases made by contractors and subcontractors on behalf of local governments.

## **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**

---

AMC supports a statewide, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that keeps Minnesota competitive in a global marketplace with long-term, sustainable funding to ensure safe systems that efficiently move people and goods.

## **Funding**

- AMC supports increased funding for all modes of transportation to meet the documented unmet needs. Despite new revenues, MnDOT has identified a shortfall of \$16 billion on the state system over the next twenty years according to the MN State Highway Investment Plan and local governments have identified an additional \$5-6 billion in funding needs on the trunk highway system. The local road and bridge system continues to face a funding gap of \$1 billion per year to adequately maintain its network. These increases should be comprehensive, balanced, sustainable, dedicated, and could include:
  - ▶ Gas tax, including indexing or other inflationary increases;
  - ▶ Motor vehicle registration fees;
  - ▶ Motor vehicle sales tax;
  - ▶ Gross receipts tax on transportation fuels;
  - ▶ Retail delivery fees.
- AMC opposes the re-allocation of existing, non-transportation related general fund dollars from other state funding obligations to transportation.
- AMC supports sales tax revenue from auto parts be dedicated to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund.
- AMC supports dedicated transit funding that is both adequate and predictable and provides the necessary revenue to support transportation options (including buses, bus rapid transit, light rail transit, passenger, and commuter rail) for transit-dependent and riders who choose to ride transit.

- AMC supports a fair and equitable distribution of revenue for the Greater Minnesota Transit Program and for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area transit system as well as the metro counties' Program of Projects.
- AMC supports funding the Active Transportation Program for local bicycle, trail, and pedestrian infrastructure, including but not limited to ADA improvements and safe routes to school infrastructure.
- 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, increased funding for the Local Road Improvement Program for the Routes of Regional Significance Account and the Rural Road Safety Account, and ongoing funding for the Busway Capital Improvement Program.
- AMC supports preserving the statewide, competitive nature of the Local Road Improvement Program and the Local Bridge Replacement Program by limiting identification of specific projects within their appropriations, and that large projects should be listed on separate line items.
- AMC supports full funding for the Board of Water and Soil Resources administered Local Road Wetland Replacement Program.
- AMC supports continued funding for the Corridors of Commerce Program for priority trunk highway infrastructure.
- AMC supports increased funding for the maintenance and deployment 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 ongoing full funding for the State Airports Fund to promote regional transportation, economic development, and homeland security.
- AMC supports efforts to capture revenue from all highway users, including electric vehicles.
- 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 State Park Road Account funds are currently authorized.
- AMC supports transit systems that provide critical access for commuters and vulnerable citizens.
- AMC supports remonumentation and maintenance of all Public Land Survey System corners in the state.
- AMC supports new state funding to be used towards staffing resources for local governments in the planning, design, and implementation of transportation and infrastructure projects.

## 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 further supports public-private partnerships as a means to supplement traditional funding programs, encourage innovation and efficiencies, and promote economic development.
- 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.
- 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.
- AMC supports efforts for MnDOT State Aid to administer Chapter 12 Disaster Assistance Contingency Account funds to locals for the cost-share for federal assistance from the Federal Highway Administration emergency relief program.
- AMC supports amending Minn. Stat. 473.4485 to require the Metropolitan Council to fully scope all Bus Rapid Transit project work within its capital projects to align and collaborate with local governments and be transparent to all funding partners regarding the full cost to implement projects and improve safety and mobility along the corridors.

## Regulations

- AMC supports policies that operate within the parameters of the current statewide variance process and maintain the MnDOT Commissioner's role in setting speed limits.
- AMC supports current rules and statutes that impact the state design standards to ensure optimal safety and mobility on roads throughout Minnesota.
- AMC supports policies and programs that streamline processes, control cost escalation, and recognize diversity among counties.
- AMC supports implementation of recommendations from the "Water Permit Streamlining for Transportation Projects" report, prepared in response to Minnesota 2012 Laws, Chapter 287, Article 3, Section 63.
- AMC supports eliminating the implements of husbandry liability exemption for damage caused by non-weight-related unlawful operation on public highway bridges.
- AMC supports the NACo policy to remove air ambulances from the definition of "Air Carrier" in ADA or other policy to protect consumers from price-gouging and/or balance billing conducted by some air ambulance providers.
- AMC supports the exemption provided for the taking of threatened and endangered species for work on a ditch, or on an existing public road right-of-way under MN Stat. 84.0895.
- AMC supports determining greenhouse gas (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) impacts on a statewide programmatic level that considers the differences in mitigation opportunities throughout the state as well as extending the implementation date or deadline until effective evaluation tools can be developed. Counties request exempting projects that are being planned to mitigate known safety issues from GHG and VMT assessment.

## 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.
- AMC supports stronger regulation of oil transport on rail lines.
- AMC supports the current option for counties to authorize specific public roads for mini-truck use, and opposes efforts to allow statewide authorization.
- AMC supports the mission, goals, and initiatives of the Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (TZD).

## Weight Regulation/Road Infrastructure Preservation

- AMC supports funding 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.
- AMC supports eliminating the implements of husbandry exemption from being weighed by law enforcement officials and the exemption from civil penalties for excess weight.
- AMC supports the ability of counties to establish load restrictions on the county road system.
- 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, including the requirement for verifiable weight tickets.
- AMC supports extending seasonal load limits on gravel roads by two weeks.
- AMC opposes any increase in non-permitted truck weights.
- 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 adjusting the relevant evidence law as it relates to receipt of overweight goods so that local law enforcement has authority to inspect and assess penalties for overweight loads during the 14-day look-back. MN Stat. 169.872
- AMC supports the ability for local law enforcement to receive truck weight enforcement training by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, or any Minnesota State College that has a Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) approved training program which includes the physical weighing of trucks.

# Vital Communities and Economic Development

---

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 thereby improving the health, safety and civic engagement of all.

## Housing

- AMC supports legislative proposals aimed at addressing housing shortages and affordability issues through additional state investments as well as the creation of financing mechanisms, including tax credits, to incent private investment in housing infrastructure.
- AMC supports the creation of a statewide review panel to evaluate regulations related to building standards, land use and environmental stewardship for their impact on housing affordability.
- AMC supports legislative solutions that provide additional housing security to vulnerable populations-- particularly seniors and persons with disabilities.

## Programs and Administration

- AMC advocates that state resources be utilized to support necessary training for both the existing and expanding workforce to sustain the growing and changing needs of Minnesota's employers. AMC supports state economic development programs which encourage job creation and sustainable community growth through the Minnesota Investment Fund, Job Creation Fund, Angel Tax Credits, and support of Small Business Development Centers.
- AMC advocates for a continued statewide Minnesota marketing program that can be benchmarked against other states' marketing programs.
- 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

---

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

## Disabled and Elderly Populations

- AMC supports training for first responders on the use of technology and other best practices to respond to crisis situations with individuals who have autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disability.
- 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.
- AMC supports county authority in managing the number of adult foster care homes.
- AMC supports state policy, programing, partnerships, monitoring and data collection systems, and other initiatives that build cross-system collaborations between law enforcement, social services, corrections, and other departments to prevent and reduce contact with the justice system for individuals with developmental disabilities.

## 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.

## Victims of Human Trafficking

- AMC supports the expansion and implementation of the Safe Harbor Law ensuring that victims of human trafficking are treated as victims under the law.



# Water

---

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

## Aquatic Invasive Species

- AMC supports maintaining legislative funding for the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid to counties.
- AMC supports the strengthening of Aquatic Invasive Species programs, which are funded by state license fees, the state General Fund, and other state funding sources.
- AMC supports effective restrictions on infested waters, including the use of temporary controls, increased fines and stringent penalties.
- AMC supports increased financial and technical support from the State in response to newly identified and potential infestations and continuing management of all known infestations to reduce the risk of spread.
- AMC supports increased State enforcement and/or increased funding for local enforcement of State Laws to prevent the spread of AIS.
- AMC supports regional cooperation and partnerships in prevention and management of AIS.

## Buffer Law Implementation

- AMC supports maintaining the local option for enforcement of the buffer law and soil loss regulations.
- AMC supports lands within required buffer areas be allowed to enroll and re-enroll in federal and state conservation programs such as CRP and CCRP or others.
- AMC supports on-going state funding for counties that affirm jurisdiction of the Minnesota buffer program.
- AMC supports the ability of counties to withdraw from enforcement of the state buffer law in the event the Riparian Protection Aid amount declines below what is necessary to enforce the program.

## Buffer Tax Exemption

- AMC supports providing a tax exemption to landowners required to comply with the riparian buffer requirements under MS 103F.48, and the state should reimburse local governments for lost revenue.

## Drainage

- AMC supports drainage law that ensures the ability of counties 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 drainage authority compliance with public notice and hearing requirements in Minnesota Statutes 103E (2022) and the 2022 Minnesota Drainage Manual. Modernization should maintain the integrity of local systems and not create additional county or systems costs.
- AMC supports adding additional definition of 'repair' and 'minor repair' to Minnesota Statute 103E.
- AMC supports changing Minnesota Statute 103E.705 to allow for the bidding requirement to be raised from \$1000 to \$5000 per mile of open ditch in the ditch system.
- AMC supports changes to drainage law that clarify the drainage authority is vested with jurisdiction over property rights acquired for 16.5-foot ditch buffer strips.
- AMC supports changes to drainage law that enables 26 percent of benefited landowners, or owners of 26 percent of the benefited lands, to petition for a redetermination of benefits in order to update benefited areas, similar to the current petition process for ditch repairs and maintenance.
- AMC supports clarifying current law that drainage authorities, including counties, may hire outside legal counsel.
- AMC supports modifications to the AgBMP Loan Program to allow drainage authorities to act as the borrower on behalf of landowners in the public ditch system.
- AMC supports legislation to provide drainage authorities the option to apportion ditch repair and maintenance costs through a runoff and sediment delivery method.

## **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:
  - Fund preservation and protection programs to prevent waters from becoming impaired;
  - Fund diverse efforts to restore and protect water resources at the local level;
  - 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
  - Work to prevent the pollution of lakes and rivers.
- AMC supports restoring and increasing state financial support for county water management planning.

## **One Watershed, One Plan: Implementation**

- AMC supports funding from the Clean Water Fund for implementation grants to local governments who have collaborated and completed a comprehensive water plan through the One Watershed One Plan process.

## **Ordinary High Watermark**

- AMC supports the creation of an appeals process for Department of Natural Resources determinations of Ordinary High Watermark, and counties may use an independent consultant as part of the process.

## **Public Waters Inventory**

- AMC supports a solution agreed to by stakeholders, including counties, in any proposed change to the Public Waters Inventory.
- AMC supports maintaining the regulatory certainty of public waters designations established under the Public Waters Inventory Program.
- AMC supports the statutory authority of local governments to review and object to changes in the status of a water on the Public Waters Inventory whether through the reclassification process or a map revision.

## **State Assumption of the Federal 404 Permit Program**

- AMC supports state assumption, in collaboration with local government, of the federal 404 permit program to increase efficiencies associated with local infrastructure projects.

## **State Water Resources Exportation**

- AMC supports legislation to prevent exportation of Minnesota groundwater resources. Local governments must have a role in decision-making that threatens the stability and quality of local water resources.

## **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 generating additional state-owned wetland banking credits through applicable state programs to be available for use by counties for local road projects.
- AMC supports modifications to the Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA), which will enhance mitigation projects statewide, by emphasizing the public value of projects rather than the size or location of projects.
- AMC supports the creation of an in-lieu fee program, administered by BWSR, which allows maximum public value for wetland mitigation projects.
- AMC supports including data from all wetland restorations or creations in the wetland replacement reporting.
- AMC opposes 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 WCA rule changes that require landowners to report exempt activities to the county.

## **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.

*Updated March 5, 2024*