



## PRESS RELEASE

Chair Suzanne LaFrance | Vice Chair Christopher Constant

# Anchorage Assembly Overrides Mayor's Line-Item Vetoes of AR 2022-178(S) As Amended to Appropriate ARPA Funding to Community Organizations

**August 25, 2022**

At a Special Meeting on Thursday, August 25, the Anchorage Assembly conducted a series of votes to overturn the mayor's line-item vetoes of Anchorage Resolution 2022-178(S) As Amended. The series of votes addressing the line-item vetoes ultimately stood to uphold the resolution as passed on August 9: [ancgov.info/AR2022-178S-LIST](http://ancgov.info/AR2022-178S-LIST)

Assembly Chair Suzanne LaFrance and Vice Chair Christopher Constant issued the following statements in opposition to the mayor's vetoes:

"The community-driven projects included in the second tranche of ARPA funding are the result of four months of thoughtful deliberation, widespread community input, and compromise by Assembly members," said **Assembly Chair LaFrance**. "By overriding the mayor's vetoes, we stand beside the transparent and collaborative process the Assembly used to develop a balanced package of projects that invest in the long-term success of the Anchorage community."

"The mayor's vetoes singled out regional projects and projects for marginalized communities: BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) Alaskans, LGBTQ+ Alaskans, new immigrants, and people facing homelessness," said **Assembly Vice Chair Constant**. "Not only did the mayor's vetoes undervalue these community-driven projects and invalidate the Assembly's collaborative work, the mayor asserts that this valuable funding opportunity should be directed towards one-time municipal costs (where other alternative funding options are available) instead of impactful investments in community organizations that will shape Anchorage for years to come."

Assembly Leadership submitted the attached Assembly Memorandum for the record.

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MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
ASSEMBLY MEMORANDUM



No. AM XXX-2022

Meeting Date: August 25, 2022

**From: Assembly Chair LaFrance and Assembly Vice Chair Constant**

**Subject: VETOES OF AR 2022-178(S), AS AMENDED, A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATING AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED FORTY-EIGHT MILLION TWO HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHT THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED EIGHTY-THREE DOLLARS (\$48,258,683) AND ALLOCATING IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS, TO THE FEDERAL DIRECT GRANTS FUND 241900.**

As Anchorage Assembly leadership, we oppose the mayor’s line-item vetoes of select projects within the second tranche of ARPA funding and stand beside the transparent and collaborative process the Assembly used to develop a balanced package of projects that invest in the long-term success of the Anchorage community. The mayor’s vetoes single out regional projects and projects for marginalized communities, such as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) Alaskans, LGBTQ+ Alaskans, new immigrants, and people facing homelessness.

The elimination of funding for these projects goes against the Assembly’s guiding principles to invest once-in-a-lifetime ARPA funds in long-term projects that aid populations that need it most; address current, historical, and geographical inequities in our systems that have intensified due to COVID-19; and have a fair and positive impact across the municipality. Not only do the mayor’s vetoes undervalue these community-driven projects and invalidate the Assembly’s collaborative work, the mayor asserts that this valuable funding opportunity should be directed towards one-time municipal costs (where other alternative funding options are available) instead of impactful investments that will shape the community for years to come.

The projects included in the second tranche of ARPA funding are the result of four months of thoughtful deliberation, widespread community input, and compromise by Assembly members to develop a balanced package of investments that serve the entire municipality through the focus areas of Child and Family Support, Housing, Economic Development (including Community Investment), and a Healthy Workforce. Each worksession was open to the public and many applicants and community members took advantage of the opportunity to advocate, answer questions and make suggestions to Assembly members in the time between worksessions.

Assembly members drafted a priority list of projects informed by their shared funding goals, as well as district-specific proposals that address the needs of members’ constituents. The package was not finalized without compromise. Funding for many projects was reduced in order to accommodate other projects. Even district-specific

1 projects negotiated to share funding that would directly benefit local communities.  
2 As a result, the ARPA package must be looked at as a whole and elimination of  
3 specific projects is detrimental to the overall goals of the package.  
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5 Specifically, we would like to address the following issues within the mayor's vetoes:  
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7 **Massive de-funding of projects within the Housing focus area, which is a**  
8 **priority area for both the Assembly and the Administration.** Homelessness and  
9 the lack of affordable housing is the most pervasive, dangerous and widespread  
10 issue impacting the health, safety and economic resilience of the municipality. The  
11 Assembly is working on this issue by supporting the Anchored Home Plan, our  
12 community's plan for ending homelessness in the Municipality, by working closely  
13 with community partners to maintain a coordinated continuum of services for  
14 members of our community who are experiencing homelessness. In response to  
15 this summer's humanitarian crisis, the Assembly recently made investments totaling  
16 \$7.6 million to bring online more than 300 units of housing as early as September.  
17

18 The success of these investments relies on complementary projects funded through  
19 ARPA, such as a near \$11.9 million investment directed to the Rasmuson  
20 Foundation<sup>1</sup> for the purchase of low income and permanent supportive housing units  
21 (Section 12), the \$400,000 investment in the Anchorage Coalition to End  
22 Homelessness to fund supportive services for landlords and people experiencing  
23 homelessness and a database which tracks homelessness data to inform data-  
24 based decisions (Section 3), and \$400,000 for Henning, Inc. to provide supportive  
25 housing services for clients at the Aviator Hotel (Section 30).  
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27 **Targeting projects that serve underserved communities.** One of the guiding  
28 principles for the Assembly for this distribution is to address current, historical, and  
29 geographical inequities in our systems that have been illuminated by COVID-19.  
30 The Assembly recognized that there are smaller and newer organizations that have  
31 a harder time getting funding from traditional sources, and wanted to make an effort  
32 to give those organizations an opportunity for funding through ARPA. Therefore, the  
33 Assembly put out a call for proposals and worked to ensure that groups throughout  
34 the community were aware of this funding opportunity. Some of the groups identified  
35 as having a hard time accessing funding are ones that serve BIPOC Alaskans,  
36 LGBTQ+ Alaskans, and recent immigrants. Therefore, it stands out that the mayor  
37 vetoed funding for the Alaska Black Caucus equity center (Section 18), the Identity,  
38 Inc. healthcare program (Section 36), the Alaska Literacy Project welcoming center  
39 (Section 32), Conquer COVID's health education campaign (Section 38) and the  
40 aforementioned housing projects.  
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42 **Targeting regional projects that are extremely important to the residents of**  
43 **those districts.** The Assembly included Section 21 for the South Potter Marsh  
44 visitor's center (Section 21) and the Fish Creek daylighting project (Section 27)

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<sup>1</sup> In his veto message, the Mayor inaccurately vetoed AR 2022-178(S) Section 12, which was amended by the Assembly before the package was approved. The mayor's veto incorrectly eliminates a \$11,900,000 appropriation attributed to the Alaska Community Foundation in reference to the purchase of the APTTEL Hotel. However, Section 12 was amended by the Assembly to decrease the amount of the investment to \$11,878,000 and direct funding to the Rasmuson Foundation.

1 because the projects received a large number of comments in favor of these projects  
2 from residents in the district and are both time-sensitive. The South Potter Marsh  
3 visitor’s center will take advantage of an upcoming road improvement project and  
4 the Fish Creek study is a critical step in this long-term investment in community and  
5 economic development. Additionally, residents from Chugiak to Girdwood have  
6 called upon the municipality to increase public restrooms in high-density areas and  
7 trailheads, and the feasibility study for this issue (Section 47) will serve people  
8 across the municipality.

9  
10 **Targeting funding for planning work.** The majority of the ARPA package goes  
11 toward capital projects and direct services, however, some funding was set aside  
12 for planning and studies, because all sizable projects must begin with planning. This  
13 is acceptable within the ARPA guidelines and is important to ensuring that  
14 Anchorage is able to grow and develop in the future.

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16 For these reasons, we express our opposition to these vetoes.

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19 Respectfully submitted: Suzanne LaFrance, Assembly Chair  
20 Christopher Constant, Assembly Vice Chair  
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