

Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) 2020 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Andy Josephson**

District: **House District 17**

1. The State of Alaska continues to face significant budget challenges, how will you address the State's budget and revenue issues? Please provide details.

A1: There are a finite number of solutions: (1) if the PFD is eliminated, our deficit is \$300 million. I would oppose this. (2) if the PFD is paid in full, and we have no new revenue, the deficit is \$2.3 Billion. Therefore, pretty clearly (short of violating a sustainable \$3.0 Billion POMV draw), if we want a PFD, we need additional revenue. (3) new revenue might come from a combination of oil severance tax hike and either a state sales tax or income tax. I'm 100% opposed to overdrawing the ERA. Finally, there is virtually no more to cut. For example: if we closed every public school, let every prisoner free, and ended the University (closed it down), the deficit with a full PFD would still be close to \$400 million. If that doesn't make it clear, nothing can.

2. In 2017, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) ranked Alaska as having a C- with respect to the condition our state's infrastructure – see following link:

<https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/alaska/> Do you support taxes and user fees, such as increased gas taxes, to help provide funding for these needs? If not, do you have another plan for maintaining our road system?

A2: I would support an increase in gas taxes or the issuance of GO Bonds. I am not afraid of amendment our very low gas tax. I voted to do just that in House Finance Committee. I sought an increase to help pay for the Spill Prevention and Response Division. It passed and was added to the bill, but the bill died before passage.

3. Alaska is eligible for federal funds through the Lands and Water Conservation Fund for design and development of parks and cultural facilities. See following link:

[https://omb.alaska.gov/ombfiles/21\\_budget/DNR/Proposed/2021proj32552.pdf](https://omb.alaska.gov/ombfiles/21_budget/DNR/Proposed/2021proj32552.pdf) Do you support the state receiving these funds? If not, why?

A3: Yes, and I'm aware of recent federal reenactment which should make this better, still. I am a big supporter of always--or darn near close to always--getting all the federal revenue we can possibly receive.

4a. The University of Alaska (UA) system has faced severe budget reductions over the past several years. Do you support current funding levels, further decreases, or efforts to reestablish funding that has been cut in recent years? If increases, where do you see that funding coming from?

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A4a: No legislator has fought the assault on UA with more vigor than I have. For example, over the objection of my own caucus, the subcommittee I chair (House Finance Subcommittee on University) rejected the 3-year compact and opted to increase the amount agreed on by the Regents and Gov. Dunleavy by \$10.5 million. I think the cuts are mostly an abomination. Lifetimes of effort have gone into building up programs. These cuts are mostly self-imposed in that, with a comprehensive fiscal plan, they were unnecessary. I would like to restore programs. Revenues would come from increases to oil severance taxes, and a broad based tax. PFDs would remain modest.

4b. As a follow up, if cuts are maintained or deepened, which programs within the UA system should be prioritized over others and where does the engineering curriculum fall in the priorities list?

A4b: Programs that would be salvaged would be: Engineering, Health Systems, and Business School.

4c. Architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design programs are not offered within the UA system. What are your thoughts on strengthening opportunities for Alaskans through the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program to make attaining these professional degrees more feasible so Alaskans can return home to our state to fill the need for design professionals?

A4c: I think I would support it. I confess, I don't know enough about it, but I don't see the downside of it. I'm a believer in keeping people here, and developing local talent to responsibly build-out the state.

5. Several states have sought to reduce or eliminate the scope of professional licensing (Engineers, Architects, Land Surveyors, and Landscape Architect) within their states. What is your stance on Alaska's current requirements for these professions: should the state's laws remain the same or be subject to change, and if changed, would you support decreasing or increasing the projects that require professional licensure?

A5: Broadly speaking, our licensure programs are introduced by the disciplines, themselves. Occasionally, there are exceptions (there was an effort to make private investigators form a board, but they resisted it; there was an effort to make Rolfers become organized under the Massage Board, and Rolfers resisted it). Sometimes, where there is no Board or Commission, oversight reverts to DCCED. I have not heard any concerns about the Engineers, Architects and Land Surveyors (there is no movement afoot to disband it). On the whole, all things being considered, I support professional licensure and Board/Commission oversight. What has been upsetting is instances where there is a bad apple and other members must bear the expense, even though all citizens in the state

benefit (contested licensure removal, for instance).

6. The "Industrial Exemption", found in Alaska Statute 08.48.331(a)(10), allows certain infrastructure, systems, and structural projects to be designed without the requirement of a licensed Professional Engineer (PE) IF the project is such that the risk to human health, safety, and welfare is limited only to employees of the company doing the work and not the "general public". It has been suggested that some very significant engineering disasters in our nation's history, such as the Challenger Space Shuttle Disaster of 1986 and the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill of 2010, may have been linked to similar "Industrial Exemptions" and might have been averted had a licensed PE been the ultimate steward of safety in those examples. Do you feel it is appropriate or inappropriate to maintain Alaska's Industrial Exemption?

A6: Well, this is the first I knew of it. I think I oppose it. Note that I'm not just saying this: my legislative record is one that focuses on public safety first. This is a tendency of mine. It is why I was the only Democrat to oppose Senate Bill 91 (crime bill). It is why I am a strong conservationist. I believe in doing things correct at the outset and that people have a right to be safe.

7. State law requires that all new buildings larger than a triplex are to be designed and constructed to the latest approved edition of the International Building Code. However, engineers performing earthquake damage assessments after the November 2018 earthquake found that a large portion of buildings are not being built in conformance with the code where there is no formal enforcement. This led to more structural damage in Eagle River and the Matanuska Borough, where there is no code enforcement, compared to Anchorage, where there is code enforcement, even though ground motions were similar. What would you do to bolster adherence to and enforcement of building codes in the vulnerable and growing population centers around Alaska that are not currently under the purview of a local code official?

A7: I would support a model housing code, or uniform code. There could be exceptions for certain rural communities. When I sat on House Labor & Commerce Committee, then Chair Sam Kito had a hearing on such a bill. I've discussed this with constituent, Clay Porter several times.

8. Do you have any plans to help reduce greenhouse gasses in order to mitigate the effects of climate change in Alaska?

A8: Tons, yes. I have sponsored more Climate Change legislation than any other legislator. I spoke just yesterday with someone about the RCA not requiring the lowest cost bidder on energy improvements to include climate change reduction improvements that are expensive, up front, but produce savings over time. I have sponsored Climate Change Commission bills and a bill to create a Special Committee

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on Climate Change. I intend to refile the letter in January.

9. Is there anything you would like our organization to know about you?

A9: I appreciate your thoughtful questions.