

Alaska Professional Design Council (APDC) 2020 Candidate Questionnaire

Name: **Matt Claman**

District: **House District 21**

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: Alaska needs a responsible action plan that addresses our financial challenges and grows the economy. Together, we must continue our work to diversify the economy, find more efficiencies in state and municipal government, and develop additional revenue sources. We need to improve public safety while making wise use of our public safety resources, support public education because public education remains our best investment for the future, maintain essential services, and invest in infrastructure to build a foundation for a growing economy.

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: The State should support have a capital budget that includes investment in construction and maintenance in essential infrastructure. A responsible action plan for Alaska includes presenting capital improvement bonds to Alaska voters for consideration. I support increasing motor fuel taxes, as Alaska has some of the lowest motor fuel taxes in the nation that have not been changed for decades.

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: I support the state receiving Land and Water Conservation funds.

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?

A4a: We must continue to work towards a responsible action plan for Alaska so we can fund essential services, which includes the University system. The University is an economic engine for Alaska and helps keep talented youth in Alaska. Education is our best

investment for the future, including vocational and university education.

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: The University should work collaboratively with the legislature and the governor on its plan for the future. The governor's unilateral decision to cut \$70 million from the University budget is [not?] in the best interests of Alaska or the University.

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: My mother was an architect and I recognize the importance of design professionals to successful economic development. We need to keep bright, young Alaskans in-state and give them more options to pursue the career of their choosing.

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: In the 31st Legislature (2019-20), I introduced HB 291 to require registration for commercial interior designers. Consistent with introducing this legislation, I support increasing the projects that require professional licensure.

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: We should learn more about the history of Alaska's Industrial Exception, including whether there have been any industrial accidents, disasters, or injuries in Alaska that

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would have been averted if we did not have the exception. Then we can make an informed decision about whether to keep, modify, or eliminate the exception.

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: The legislature should work with local governments to find effective ways to support code inspection and enforcement in areas where there currently is no formal enforcement.

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

A8: I support efforts for a better balance between reducing the effects of climate change and effective economic development in Alaska.

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

A9: I appreciate the work of the Alaska Professional Design Council and would welcome your support for my campaign.