



**Alaska State Officers Compensation  
Commission**

**Amended Preliminary Findings  
and  
Recommendations**

December 21, 2017

Commission Members:

Glenn Clary, Chair

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## **Amended Preliminary Findings and Recommendations**

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### Introduction

The Alaska State Officers Compensation Commission is directed by law to “review the salaries, benefits, and allowances of members of the legislature, the governor, the lieutenant governor, and each principal executive department head and prepare a report on its findings at least once every two years, but not more frequently than every year.” [AS 39.23.540(a)] The commission is to prepare preliminary recommendations by November 15, and, after soliciting public comment, submit final recommendations to the governor and legislature by the tenth day of the next legislative session.

On January 10, 2009, the commission recommended salary adjustments for legislators and department heads and on January 26, 2011, the commission recommended salary adjustments for the governor and lieutenant governor. These salary increases were not rejected by the legislature, and they became law according to AS 39.23.540(d). The commission recommended salary adjustments for executive salaries in 2014; however, those recommendations were rejected by the legislature. Finally, on December 15, 2016, the commission recommended that the salary of a deputy commissioner who accepts the office of department head with the same department with no break in service and is paid a salary higher than the salary authorized for the department head, shall retain his or her current salary while holding the position of department head. This recommendation was not rejected by the legislature and was subsequently became law.

On October 25, 2017, the commission met in Anchorage to consider recommendations for 2018. With regards to the Governor’s, Lieutenant Governor and executive salaries, the commission decided to not make any recommendations. With regards to legislative salaries and per diem, the commission decided to make the recommendations that the salaries of the legislature be reduced by 10%. In addition, the commission proposed that the legislature follow the State of Alaska per diem, travel and lodging rates as found in the Alaska Administrative Manual.

The commission solicited public comment and held a meeting on December 5, 2017 to discuss and finalize its preliminary findings and recommendations.

The commission will solicit public comment on these amended findings and recommendations before making a final submission to the Governor and legislature by the tenth day of the legislative session beginning in January 2018.

### Amended Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

The commission recommends that the salaries of the legislature be reduced by 10% effective January 1, 2019. In addition, the commission recommends that the legislature continue to pay

the federal per diem rates; however, per diem cannot be taken when a legislator is within 50 miles of his/her primary residence.

## Discussion

Initially, the commission made the recommendation to reduce legislators' salaries by 10%. However, upon further discussion, the recommendation was modified to take effect January 1, 2019. Eighty-three percent (83%) of legislators will be up for reelection prior to that date. Only 10 of the current 60 legislators will not be required to seek reelection. By extending the effective date, current legislators can take the pay reduction into account when determining whether they will seek reelection. The reduced pay can also be considered by those members of the public when choosing whether they will seek election.

The commission's initial recommendation was to apply the State of Alaska Administrative Manual per diem rates and rules to legislators. Upon further reflection and discussion, it was determined that this manual was written for executive branch employees and did not translate well to legislators. Instead the commission decided to recommend that per diem continue to be paid based on the federal rate; however, legislators would not be eligible for per diem if the session was being held within 50 miles of their primary residence. Considerations that went into this recommendation include the lack of legislative affairs agency staff to process actual payments as well as the desire that legislators not receive per diem when staying in their own homes.

This report is available on the commission's website [www.doa.alaska.gov/dop/socc](http://www.doa.alaska.gov/dop/socc). Comments may be sent to the commission by email to [kate.sheehan@alaska.gov](mailto:kate.sheehan@alaska.gov). A Public Hearing is scheduled for January 9, 2018 at 11 a.m. This will be a telephonic hearing. The call in number is 1-800-315-6338, Access code 46544031. The commission welcomes public input on these amended preliminary findings and recommendations.