



# ALASKA ARCTIC POLICY COMMISSION

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Testimony for the  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
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On January 30, 2015 the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission released its Final Report consisting of three parts: the Final Report itself; an Implementation Plan; and an Executive Summary – all are available at [www.akarctic.com](http://www.akarctic.com), and you should all have copies in front of you.

The AAPC also developed a draft Arctic policy bill, which has been introduced in the Legislature by AAPC co-chairs Senator Lesil McGuire and Representative Bob Herron as SB16/HB 1. The AAPC's Final Report, Implementation Plan and SB16/HB 1 were all informed by public and expert testimony at the AAPC's plenary meetings, including testimony from numerous indigenous organizations. In addition, the AAPC convened work sessions and listening sessions on different topic areas. SB 16/HB 1 is designed to guide the state's initiatives (especially the strategic recommendations in the AAPC Implementation Plan) and inform U.S. domestic and international Arctic policy in order to best serve the interests of Alaskans and the nation.

The AAPC developed these policy statements based on 4 Vision statements:

- 1) To uphold the state's commitment to economically vibrant communities sustained by development activities consistent with the state's responsibility for a healthy environment;
- 2) Collaborate with all levels of government, tribes, industry, and NGO's to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-making resulting in more informed, sustainable and beneficial outcomes;
- 3) Enhance the security of the state through a safe and secure Arctic for individuals and communities;
- 4) Value and strengthen the resilience of communities and respect and integrate the culture and knowledge of Arctic peoples.

During one of our Commission's listening sessions in Barrow (which is on the coast of the Arctic Ocean), we had the pleasure of most of the NSAR's (National Strategy on the Arctic Region) implementation team teleconferencing in. During that conversation we pointed out that the word "people" was not in their plan. Anywhere. We would like to remind the committee that people live in the Arctic. It is all of our responsibility to treat these communities like we treat any other community: with respect and dignity. Efforts by the Executive Branch to lock up our land, to stifle our ability to economically develop and adapt to new climate situations is not just a disservice to Alaskans, it is a disservice to the country. Alaskans do not live in a snow globe, we live in the United States.

We have told the State Dept. that you cannot solve a global issue like climate change by hamstringing Alaska's ability to responsibly develop our resources. Adaptation is the key. However, in order for Alaskans to have the capacity to adapt to a changing climate, we must have the freedom of self-determination. Alaskans have 40years of responsible Arctic development experience. We are global leaders in things like:  
Arctic logistics, Micro-Grids, Hybrid wind-diesel electric systems, Arctic engineering, and, Vessel tracking and compliance.

Alaska should not have to *ASK* for permission to develop our resources or our people. If this Administration is not going to be our advocate, the least they could do would be avoid being our opponent

The Implementation Plan and SB16/HB1 follow four priority lines of effort:

- 1) Promoting economic and resource development;
- 2) Addressing the infrastructure and response capacity gap in the Arctic;
- 3) Supporting healthy communities; and
- 4) Strengthening a state-based agenda for Arctic science & research.

The AAPC Final Report and SB 16/HB 1 comprise the first comprehensive articulation of Alaska's arctic policy and will enable Alaska to become the leader it needs to be on Arctic policy, and to more effectively partner (and contend) with the federal government on shaping a prosperous Arctic future.

Alaskans are on the forefront of new exploration and use of Arctic resources, and of new circumpolar cooperation. Providing relevant information about the reality of the emerging Arctic, understanding and communicating the critical issues that affect this frontier, and instilling confidence in the promise of safety and prosperity is essential as Alaska and America move forward to ensure both.

You have copies of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission's Final Report and Implementation Plan. Three of the efforts described on page 11, 13 and 15 by the AAPC would easily fit into the larger Arctic Council US Initiatives and would bolster the Council's activities vis-à-vis economic security for the people who live in the Arctic. They are 1(b): Strengthen or develop a mechanism for resource production-related revenue sharing to impacted communities; 1(d) Promote entrepreneurship and enterprise development; and 1(f) Increase economic returns to Alaska and Alaskan communities and individuals from maritime and fisheries activities.

We have argued, and will continue to argue that the US's Arctic Council priorities need to focus on the people: economic development for the people of the North. Which was the Canadian Chairmanship theme. The US now needs to take the baton from them and be the new leaders in this mission. That is the only way we will have the ability to adapt to new realities. Alaskans have been adapting for generations. To not seek Alaskan's advice and leadership on Arctic matters is shortsighted. The US is an Arctic nation only because of Alaska.