HOUSE BILL NO. 1

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES HERRON, Edgmon, Millett, Lynn

Introduced: 1/21/15
Referred: House Special Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Arctic Policy, State Affairs

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

Section 1. The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:

LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT. (a) The legislature finds that
(1) the state is what makes the United States an Arctic nation;
(2) the entirety of the state is affected by the activities and prosperity in the Arctic region, and conversely, the Arctic region is affected by the activities and prosperity in the other regions of the state;
(3) residents of the state, having lived and worked in the Arctic region for decades, have developed expert knowledge regarding a full range of activities and issues involving the region;
(4) residents of the state recognize the risks that come with climate variability and emerging threats to ecosystems, as well as increased maritime activity, but are optimistic that the skillful application of expertise, coupled with circumpolar cooperation, will usher in a
new era of economic and resource development that will improve the quality of life for residents of the state;

(5) the development of the state's natural resources in an environmentally and socially responsible manner is essential to the development of the state's economy and to the well-being of the residents of the state;

(6) respect for the indigenous peoples who have been the majority of the inhabitants of the Arctic region for thousands of years and who depend on a healthy environment to ensure their physical and spiritual well-being is critical to understanding and strengthening the Arctic region;

(7) the United States, other nations, and international bodies, including the Arctic Council, are rapidly developing Arctic strategies and policies, and therefore it is essential that both the state and the nation communicate the reality, richness, and responsibility that comes with being in the Arctic, including communicating the need to provide safety, security, and prosperity to the region;

(8) it is essential for the state and federal government to strengthen their collaboration on Arctic issues, including coordination when creating strategies, policies, and implementation plans related to the Arctic, as both continue to engage in international circumpolar activity;

(9) the state should develop and maintain capacity, in the form of an official body or bodies within the executive or legislative branch, or both, to develop further strategies and policies for the Arctic region that respond to the priorities and critical needs of residents of the state.

(b) It is the intent of the legislature that this declaration of Arctic policy

(1) be implemented through statutes and regulations;

(2) not conflict with, subjugate, or duplicate other existing state policy;

(3) guide future legislation derived from the implementation strategy developed by the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission;

(4) clearly communicate the interests of residents of the state to the federal government, the governments of other nations, and other international bodies developing policies related to the Arctic.

* Sec. 2. AS 44.99 is amended by adding a new section to read:
Sec. 44.99.105. Declaration of state Arctic policy. (a) It is the policy of the state, as it relates to the Arctic, to

   (1) uphold the state's commitment to economically vibrant communities sustained by development activities consistent with the state's responsibility for a healthy environment, including efforts to

   (A) ensure that Arctic residents and communities benefit from economic and resource development activities in the region;

   (B) improve the efficiency, predictability, and stability of permitting and regulatory processes;

   (C) attract investment through the establishment of a positive investment climate and the development of strategic infrastructure;

   (D) sustain current, and develop new, approaches for responding to a changing climate;

   (E) encourage industrial and technological innovation in the private and academic sectors that focuses on emerging opportunities and challenges;

   (2) collaborate with all levels of government, tribes, industry, and nongovernmental organizations to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-making resulting in more informed, sustainable, and beneficial outcomes, including efforts to

   (A) strengthen and expand cross-border relationships and international cooperation, especially bilateral engagements with Canada and Russia;

   (B) sustain and enhance state participation in the Arctic Council;

   (C) pursue opportunities to participate meaningfully as a partner in the development of federal and international Arctic policies, thereby incorporating state and local knowledge and expertise;

   (D) strengthen communication with Arctic Council permanent participants, who include and represent the state's indigenous peoples;

   (E) reiterate the state's long-time support for ratification of the
Law of the Sea Treaty;

(3) enhance the security of the state through a safe and secure Arctic for individuals and communities, including efforts to

   (A) enhance disaster and emergency prevention and response, oil spill prevention and response, and search and rescue capabilities in the region;

   (B) provide safe, secure, and reliable maritime transportation in the areas of the state adjacent to the Arctic;

   (C) sustain current, and develop new, community, response, and resource-related infrastructure;

   (D) coordinate with the federal government for an increase in United States Coast Guard presence, national defense obligations, and levels of public and private sector support; and

(4) value and strengthen the resilience of communities and respect and integrate the culture and knowledge of Arctic peoples, including efforts to

   (A) recognize Arctic indigenous peoples’ cultures and unique relationship to the environment, including traditional reliance on a subsistence way of life for food security, which provides a spiritual connection to the land and the sea;

   (B) build capacity to conduct science and research and advance innovation and technology in part by providing support to the University of Alaska for Arctic research consistent with state priorities;

   (C) employ integrated, strategic planning that considers scientific, local, and traditional knowledge;

   (D) safeguard the fish, wildlife, and environment of the Arctic for the benefit of residents of the state;

   (E) encourage more effective integration of local and traditional knowledge into conventional science, research, and resource management decision making.

(b) It is important to the state, as it relates to the Arctic, to support the strategic recommendations of the implementation plan developed by the Alaska Arctic Policy
Commission and to encourage consideration of recommendations developed by the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission. Priority lines of effort for the Arctic policy of the state include

(1) promoting economic and resource development;

(2) addressing the infrastructure and response capacity gap in the Arctic region;

(3) supporting healthy communities; and

(4) strengthening a state-based agenda for science and research in the Arctic.

(c) In this section, "Arctic" means the area of the state north of the Arctic Circle, north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Rivers, all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean, and the Beaufort, Bering, and Chukchi Seas, and the Aleutian Chain, except that, for the purpose of international Arctic policy, "Arctic" means the entirety of the state.