HB 1 "An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state"

Sectional Analysis

Section 1 Places findings and intent of the legislature related to the Arctic in uncodified law.

a) Specifically, the legislature finds that:
   1) Alaska makes the United States an Arctic nation;
   2) All of Alaska is affected by activity in its Arctic region and vice-versa;
   3) Alaskans are Arctic experts;
   4) Climate change and increased activity present risks to the Arctic, but with appropriate expertise and pan-Arctic cooperation, economic development can be sustainably pursued for the benefit of all Alaskans;
   5) Environmentally conscious development is vital to the state’s well-being;
   6) Respect for indigenous peoples is critical to understanding the Arctic;
   7) The state & federal government should strengthen Arctic cooperation;
   8) Alaska should create and maintain an official body to further develop Arctic strategies and policies;

b) The legislature intends that this Arctic policy:
   1) Be implemented through statutes and regulations;
   2) Not conflict with existing state policy;
   3) Serve as a guide for policy derived from the AAPC’s Imp. Plan;
   4) Communicate the Arctic interests of the state to other governments.

Section AS 44.99.105 Declares a state Arctic policy.

a) It is state’s Arctic policy to:
   1) Uphold the state’s commitment to economically vibrant communities while maintaining a healthy environment, including efforts to:
      A. Ensure local benefit;
      B. Improve regulatory processes;
      C. Attract investment by improving infrastructure and the investment climate;
D. Continue strategies for adapting to climate change;
E. Encourage technological innovation that focuses on emerging opportunities;
F. Maintain a strong fisheries industry.

2) Collaborate with all appropriate entities to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-making, including efforts to:
   A. Strengthen international cooperation;
   B. Enhance state participation in the Arctic Council;
   C. Work to partner in the development of federal and international Arctic polices, thereby incorporating local expertise;
   D. Strengthen communication with the four Arctic Council Permanent Participants with Alaskan indigenous representation;
   E. Reiterate Alaska’s support for ratification of Law of the Sea.

3) Enhance Alaska’s security by strengthening Arctic safety, including efforts to:
   A. Enhance response to disasters, oil spills, and search and rescue;
   B. Increase safety of Arctic maritime transportation;
   C. Sustain and develop new infrastructure;
   D. Work with feds to increase Coast Guard and other security presence.

4) Strengthen resilience of arctic communities and integrate local knowledge, including efforts to:
   A. Recognize indigenous cultures’ relation to the environment;
   B. Build science and research capacity;
   C. Employ integrated strategic planning that considers science and local knowledge;
   D. Safeguard the Arctic environment and its living resources;
   E. Work to integrate local knowledge into conventional resource management decision-making.

b) The state should support and encourage consideration of the recommendations in the AAPC Implementation Plan. Priority lines of effort for the state’s Arctic policy include:
   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.

c) The state’s definition of its Arctic boundary aligns with that of the federal Arctic Research and Policy Act (1984). For international purposes, “Arctic” means the entirety of the state.