

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



## **Representative Bob Herron**

State Capitol Building, Room 406

Phone (907) 465-4942

Rep.Bob.Herron@akleg.gov

CSHB 1 (EDA) am, "An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state."

### **Sponsor Statement**

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.

HB 1 is a product of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC). HB 1 was informed by public and expert testimony at all of the AAPC's plenary meetings, including testimony from numerous indigenous organizations. In addition, the AAPC convened work sessions and listening sessions on broad topic areas that informed its Final Report, Implementation Plan and HB 1.

Alaska's Arctic policy is designed to guide the state's initiatives and inform U.S. domestic and international Arctic policy in order to best serve the interests of Alaskans and the nation.

HB 1 states that it is the intent of the legislature that this Arctic policy: Be implemented through statutes and regulations; Not conflict with existing state policy; Serve as a guide for legislation derived from the AAPC's Implementation Plan; and Communicate the Arctic interests of the state to other governments.

HB 1 declares that it is Alaska's Arctic policy to:

- 1) Uphold the state's commitment to economically vibrant communities while maintaining a healthy environment;
- 2) Collaborate with all appropriate entities to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-making;

- 3) Enhance Alaska's security by strengthening Arctic safety; and
- 4) Value and strengthen the resilience of arctic communities and respect & integrate the culture and knowledge of Arctic peoples.

The bill also asks the state to 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.

Lastly, this bill aligns the state's definition of its Arctic boundary with that of the federal Arctic Research and Policy Act (1984). For international purposes, "Arctic" means the entirety of the state.

If passed this legislation will help 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.