

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



## **Representative Bob Herron**

State Capitol Building, Room 406

Phone 907.465.4942

rep.bob.herron@akleg.gov

### **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.