

**STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE**

2012

Source

SCS CSHCR 23(FIN)

**Legislative
Resolve No.**

52



Establishing and relating to the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

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

WHEREAS the Arctic is warming at twice the global rate, resulting in the loss of perennial sea ice and changes to the terrestrial environment; and

WHEREAS scientists recently predicted that, in 30 to 40 years, there will no longer be summer sea ice in the Arctic; and

WHEREAS reduced sea ice is affecting polar route navigation by opening oceans previously frozen year-round; and

WHEREAS the loss of sea ice will bring new opportunities for mineral extraction, oil and gas development, fisheries, tourism, and marine shipping; and

WHEREAS the Arctic might contain one-quarter of the world's untapped petroleum reserves; and

WHEREAS Norway, Canada, Russia, and Denmark are making or preparing to make claims to the Arctic seafloor under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and are increasing their scientific research on and offshore exploration for minerals and oil and gas; and

WHEREAS Canada and Russia are increasing their military presence in the Arctic and are planning to build infrastructure to support that increased military presence; and

WHEREAS both Arctic and non-Arctic countries are increasing their presence in the Arctic and are building or planning to build additional infrastructure, including ports, safe harbors, search and rescue centers, and icebreakers and other Arctic-capable vessels; and

WHEREAS the waters of Northern Alaska are of national security and strategic importance to the United States and the state; and

WHEREAS, because of national security concerns, the United States Coast Guard is increasing its presence in the North and has plans to build new infrastructure to support its heightened activity, including housing and office facilities and possibly including a deepwater port; and

WHEREAS Northern Alaska contains important mineral and other resources, both in state waters and on the outer continental shelf; and

WHEREAS local communities, businesses, the state, and the natural resources upon which they rely will be affected by commercial activities and resource development in the Arctic, and each has a significant stake in the nature and course of those activities and development; and

WHEREAS climate changes in the Arctic affect the habitat, accessibility, and viability of fish and wildlife species that local communities rely on for nutritional and cultural purposes; and

WHEREAS Norway, Canada, Russia, Denmark, and other countries have formal Arctic policies on or strategies for future development in the Arctic; and

WHEREAS the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut have developed a shared northern vision to guide development in the Canadian Arctic; and

WHEREAS this state is the only Arctic state in the United States; and

WHEREAS the state does not have a comprehensive plan for the northern waters of Alaska; and

WHEREAS the state does not have a comprehensive Arctic policy; and

WHEREAS a comprehensive policy to address the Arctic areas of the state, including the economic, ecological, and security effects, will benefit the state and its residents; and

WHEREAS it is the policy of the United States government to involve the indigenous

communities of the Arctic in decisions that affect those communities;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission is created in the legislative branch and shall consist of 20 members and four alternate members as follows:

(1) three senators appointed by the President of the Senate, one member being from the minority;

(2) three representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one member being from the minority;

(3) 13 members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as follows, of which the members appointed under (B) - (M) of this paragraph shall be residents of the state:

(A) one member representing the federal government;

(B) one member representing a tribal entity;

(C) one member representing the mining industry;

(D) one member representing the oil and gas industry;

(E) one member representing an accredited university or college in Alaska, who has a background in Arctic science;

(F) one member representing fisheries;

(G) one member from a local government or an association of a local government;

(H) one member from a coastal community with experience in a coastal management program;

(I) one member representing an international Arctic organization;

(J) one member of a conservation group;

(K) one member representing the marine transportation and logistics industry;

(L) one member representing a Native corporation organized under 43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq. (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act);

(M) one member representing marine pilots licensed under AS 08.62;

(4) one member representing the executive branch of state government, appointed by the Governor;

(5) four alternate members as follows:

(A) two members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, each of whom shall be a resident of the state and meet at least one of the qualifications of a regular member appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(B) one senator appointed by the President of the Senate;

(C) one representative appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that a vacancy on the commission shall be filled in the manner of the original appointment; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the representatives on the commission shall select one cochair from the representative members, and the senators on the commission shall select one cochair from the senator members; and the cochairs may assign staff to provide support to the commission; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the public members and, if the member representing the federal government does not receive reimbursement for expenses from the federal government, the federal government member of the commission may receive per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards and commissions under AS 39.20.180; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission may meet during and between legislative sessions, and the duties of the commission include the following:

(1) conduct hearings and take public testimony throughout the state to fulfill the purpose of the commission;

(2) develop an Arctic policy for the state and produce a strategy for the implementation of an Arctic policy; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall provide recommendations regarding Arctic policy and shall deliver a preliminary report of its findings to the legislature by January 30, 2014, and deliver a final report to the legislature on January 30, 2015, together with legislative proposals for consideration; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall be available for legislative hearings regarding its final report and recommendations; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the continuation or termination of the commission

shall be reevaluated during the First Regular Session of the Twenty-Ninth Alaska State Legislature.