

Senator Begich - Inuvikput Package

Introduced August 3, 2009, the *Inuvikput Package* consists of seven pieces of legislation:

S.1560 Arctic OCS Revenue Sharing Act - Alaska Natives who have subsisted on marine mammals and other arctic resources for thousands of years would bear the direct risks of increased commercial activity in their waters. This bill directs a portion of federal revenues from offshore oil and gas development - the same share Louisiana receives from drilling in the adjacent Gulf of Mexico - to the State of Alaska with a percentage of those funds directed to those most affected.

S.1561 Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment Implementation Act - As the polar icecap recedes, the Arctic region is increasingly accessible to shipping and tourism. This bill is designed to ensure safe and reliable maritime transportation in the Arctic and protect its waters. It would boost the nation's investment in needed infrastructure, including replacement of America's aging fleet of icebreakers and building new forward operating air bases for the Coast Guard to assert our national interest in the region.

S.1562 Arctic Science, Coordination and Integration Act - Numerous scientists and agencies conduct important and needed research into various aspects of the Arctic but concerns remain that these efforts are not well coordinated and leave gaps in our understanding of Arctic issues. This bill calls on the National Research Council to undertake a study toward a comprehensive strategy to coordinate Arctic research and make recommendations to Congress on a long-term Arctic Ocean research plan.

S.1563 Arctic Ambassador Act - Russia, Canada, Norway and other Arctic nations are represented at the ambassadorial level before the Arctic Council and U.S. interests would benefit from an enhanced diplomatic presence in Arctic matters. This bill is intended to strengthen U.S. representation before the Arctic Council and other international forums by appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Arctic.

S.1564 Arctic Oil Spill Research and Recovery Act - Vast energy reserves are believed to lie beneath Arctic waters and it is vital that any development of such resources be conducted in a responsible manner that protects the environment upon which residents of the region depend. This bill directs the Secretary of Commerce to conduct research to improve oil spill prevention, response and recovery in Arctic conditions and requires the Coast Guard to assess and reduce risk from such development.

S.1565 Arctic Health Research Act - People of the Arctic suffer from increased rates of alcohol abuse, diabetes, high blood pressure, and death from injury and suicide. This act would initiate a study into the mental, behavioral and physical health problems in the Arctic, institute an Arctic health assessment program at the Centers for Disease Control and create an "Arctic desk" at the National Institute of Health that was called for in 1984 but has never been established.

S.1566 Arctic Climate Change Adaptation Act - Alaska villages and public infrastructure are already suffering from coastal erosion, flooding, permafrost melting and other impacts of climate change. This bill would help the State of Alaska, Alaska Native organizations, affected Arctic communities and the private sector adapt to the impacts of climate change and assist in dealing with habitat restoration, clean energy development and other economic development activities.