



March 19, 2015

Representative Ben Nageak
State Capitol Room 126
Juneau, AK 99801

Senator Lesil McGuire
State Capitol Room 121
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SUPPORT FOR THE ARCTIC ECONOMIC COUNCIL

Dear Representative Nageak and Senator McGuire:

On behalf of Bering Straits Native Corporation, I am writing this letter to ask for your general support of the Arctic Economic Council (AEC). The AEC works to foster business development in the Arctic, engages in deeper circumpolar cooperation, and provides a business perspective to the work of the Arctic Council, its parent organization.

The AEC was created under the leadership of the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and the U.S. delegation of the AEC is comprised entirely of Alaskans. Four of the six Permanent Participants are also Alaska based, which provides even more meaningful representation for our state within the Arctic Economic Council.

The creation of the AEC comes at critical time. With the possibility of oil and gas exploration and production in U.S. Arctic waters, increased international shipping, as well longer ice-free periods and changing storm patterns, coastal Arctic communities face new challenges and opportunities. The U.S. has proposed a structure that mirror's the rotation of the chairmanship for the Arctic Council. This means that the U.S. could also potentially assume the chairmanship of the AEC in April, which is the same time the chairmanship of the Arctic Council is handed over from Canada to the U.S.

Acquiring the chairmanship of the AEC for the next two years empowers Alaskans to set the agenda for responsible and sustainable pan-Arctic economic development. Bering Straits Native Corp. recognizes the importance and strength of the AEC. We also respectfully encourage the Alaska State Legislature to demonstrate its support of and confidence in the AEC.

Thank you,

Gail R. Schubert
President & CEO

Cc: Governor Bill Walker
Lt. Governor Byron Mallott
Senate President Kevin Meyer
Senator Donny Olson
House Speaker Mike Chenault