

Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Lesil McGuire

Sponsor Statement

SB 16

“An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state”

Globally, all eyes are on the Arctic with new opportunities and challenges emerging as the region becomes increasingly accessible. 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.

Senate Bill 16 is a product of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC). SB 16 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 three deliverables: the Final Report, Implementation Plan and SB 16.

SB 16 declares that Alaska’s Arctic policy:

- 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.

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. It is built around the four vision statements derived from the AAPC’s final report and urges support for the four lines of effort from the AAPC’s Implementation Plan.

Alaska is what makes the United States and Arctic nation. I ask for your support on SB 16 to help Alaska formally solidify its leadership in Arctic Policy.