

Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Lesil McGuire

Sectional Analysis

SB 16
(29-LS0044\I)

“An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state”

Please note that this analysis is not an authoritative interpretation of the bill. The bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

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) Other regions and nations are rapidly developing Arctic policies & strategies, so Alaska must effectively communicate its Arctic vision for safety, security & prosperity
 - 8) The state & federal government should strengthen Arctic cooperation;
 - 9) 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 legislation derived from the AAPC’s Imp. Plan;
 - 4) Communicate the Arctic interests of the state to other governments.

Section 2: 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.
 - 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 policies, thereby incorporating local expertise;
 - D. Strengthen communication with Arctic Council Permanent Participants;
 - 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.