

HOUSE BILL NO. 1

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

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Introduced: 1/21/15

Referred: House Special Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Arctic Policy, State Affairs

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act declaring the Arctic policy of the state."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
4 to read:

5 **LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS AND INTENT.** (a) The legislature finds that

6 (1) the state is what makes the United States an Arctic nation;

7 (2) the entirety of the state is affected by the activities and prosperity in the
8 Arctic region, and conversely, the Arctic region is affected by the activities and prosperity in
9 the other regions of the state;

10 (3) residents of the state, having lived and worked in the Arctic region for
11 decades, have developed expert knowledge regarding a full range of activities and issues
12 involving the region;

13 (4) residents of the state recognize the risks that come with climate variability
14 and emerging threats to ecosystems, as well as increased maritime activity, but are optimistic
15 that the skillful application of expertise, coupled with circumpolar cooperation, will usher in a

1 new era of economic and resource development that will improve the quality of life for
2 residents of the state;

3 (5) the development of the state's natural resources in an environmentally and
4 socially responsible manner is essential to the development of the state's economy and to the
5 well-being of the residents of the state;

6 (6) respect for the indigenous peoples who have been the majority of the
7 inhabitants of the Arctic region for thousands of years and who depend on a healthy
8 environment to ensure their physical and spiritual well-being is critical to understanding and
9 strengthening the Arctic region;

10 (7) the United States, other nations, and international bodies, including the
11 Arctic Council, are rapidly developing Arctic strategies and policies, and therefore it is
12 essential that both the state and the nation communicate the reality, richness, and
13 responsibility that comes with being in the Arctic, including communicating the need to
14 provide safety, security, and prosperity to the region;

15 (8) it is essential for the state and federal government to strengthen their
16 collaboration on Arctic issues, including coordination when creating strategies, policies, and
17 implementation plans related to the Arctic, as both continue to engage in international
18 circumpolar activity;

19 (9) the state should develop and maintain capacity, in the form of an official
20 body or bodies within the executive or legislative branch, or both, to develop further strategies
21 and policies for the Arctic region that respond to the priorities and critical needs of residents
22 of the state.

23 (b) It is the intent of the legislature that this declaration of Arctic policy

24 (1) be implemented through statutes and regulations;

25 (2) not conflict with, subjugate, or duplicate other existing state policy;

26 (3) guide future legislation derived from the implementation strategy
27 developed by the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission;

28 (4) clearly communicate the interests of residents of the state to the federal
29 government, the governments of other nations, and other international bodies developing
30 policies related to the Arctic.

31 * **Sec. 2.** AS 44.99 is amended by adding a new section to read:

1 **Sec. 44.99.105. Declaration of state Arctic policy.** (a) It is the policy of the
2 state, as it relates to the Arctic, to

3 (1) uphold the state's commitment to economically vibrant
4 communities sustained by development activities consistent with the state's
5 responsibility for a healthy environment, including efforts to

6 (A) ensure that Arctic residents and communities benefit from
7 economic and resource development activities in the region;

8 (B) improve the efficiency, predictability, and stability of
9 permitting and regulatory processes;

10 (C) attract investment through the establishment of a positive
11 investment climate and the development of strategic infrastructure;

12 (D) sustain current, and develop new, approaches for
13 responding to a changing climate;

14 (E) encourage industrial and technological innovation in the
15 private and academic sectors that focuses on emerging opportunities and
16 challenges;

17 (2) collaborate with all levels of government, tribes, industry, and
18 nongovernmental organizations to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-
19 making resulting in more informed, sustainable, and beneficial outcomes, including
20 efforts to

21 (A) strengthen and expand cross-border relationships and
22 international cooperation, especially bilateral engagements with Canada and
23 Russia;

24 (B) sustain and enhance state participation in the Arctic
25 Council;

26 (C) pursue opportunities to participate meaningfully as a
27 partner in the development of federal and international Arctic policies, thereby
28 incorporating state and local knowledge and expertise;

29 (D) strengthen communication with Arctic Council permanent
30 participants, who include and represent the state's indigenous peoples;

31 (E) reiterate the state's long-time support for ratification of the

1 Law of the Sea Treaty;

2 (3) enhance the security of the state through a safe and secure Arctic
3 for individuals and communities, including efforts to

4 (A) enhance disaster and emergency prevention and response,
5 oil spill prevention and response, and search and rescue capabilities in the
6 region;

7 (B) provide safe, secure, and reliable maritime transportation in
8 the areas of the state adjacent to the Arctic;

9 (C) sustain current, and develop new, community, response,
10 and resource-related infrastructure;

11 (D) coordinate with the federal government for an increase in
12 United States Coast Guard presence, national defense obligations, and levels of
13 public and private sector support; and

14 (4) value and strengthen the resilience of communities and respect and
15 integrate the culture and knowledge of Arctic peoples, including efforts to

16 (A) recognize Arctic indigenous peoples' cultures and unique
17 relationship to the environment, including traditional reliance on a subsistence
18 way of life for food security, which provides a spiritual connection to the land
19 and the sea;

20 (B) build capacity to conduct science and research and advance
21 innovation and technology in part by providing support to the University of
22 Alaska for Arctic research consistent with state priorities;

23 (C) employ integrated, strategic planning that considers
24 scientific, local, and traditional knowledge;

25 (D) safeguard the fish, wildlife, and environment of the Arctic
26 for the benefit of residents of the state;

27 (E) encourage more effective integration of local and
28 traditional knowledge into conventional science, research, and resource
29 management decision making.

30 (b) It is important to the state, as it relates to the Arctic, to support the strategic
31 recommendations of the implementation plan developed by the Alaska Arctic Policy

1 Commission and to encourage consideration of recommendations developed by the
2 Alaska Arctic Policy Commission. Priority lines of effort for the Arctic policy of the
3 state include

- 4 (1) promoting economic and resource development;
- 5 (2) addressing the infrastructure and response capacity gap in the
6 Arctic region;
- 7 (3) supporting healthy communities; and
- 8 (4) strengthening a state-based agenda for science and research in the
9 Arctic.

10 (c) In this section, "Arctic" means the area of the state north of the Arctic
11 Circle, north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and
12 Kuskokwim Rivers, all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean, and the Beaufort,
13 Bering, and Chukchi Seas, and the Aleutian Chain, except that, for the purpose of
14 international Arctic policy, "Arctic" means the entirety of the state.