

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ARCTIC**

April 2, 2015

8:15 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Co-Chair
Senator Lesil McGuire, Co-Chair
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Donald Olson
Senator John Coghill

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Click Bishop

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5(EDA) AM
Declaring 2015, 2016, and 2017 to be the Years of the Arctic;
encouraging the state and its partners to join with the
Institute of the North in encouraging the state to promote its
Arctic policy during the Years of the Arctic and to take action
to address the strategic recommendations in the Implementation
Plan of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

- MOVED SCS CSHCR 5(ARC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION: BERING SEA ALLIANCE

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 5

SHORT TITLE: DECLARE 2015-2017 AS YEARS OF THE ARCTIC

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) HERRON

02/20/15	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/15	(H)	EDA, FIN
03/10/15	(H)	EDA AT 11:15 AM BARNES 124
03/10/15	(H)	Moved CSHCR 5(EDA) Out of Committee
03/10/15	(H)	MINUTE(EDA)

03/11/15 (H) EDA RPT CS(EDA) NT 3DP 1NR
03/11/15 (H) DP: ORTIZ, WOOL, HERRON
03/11/15 (H) NR: TILTON
03/16/15 (H) FIN REFERRAL WAIVED
03/23/15 (H) BEFORE HOUSE IN SECOND READING
03/23/15 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/23/15 (H) VERSION: CSHCR 5(EDA) AM
03/25/15 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/25/15 (S) ARC
04/02/15 (S) ARC AT 8:15 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE BOB HERRON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HCR 5.

NILS ANDREASSEN, Executive Director
Institute of the North
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HCR 5.

ART IVANOFF, CEO
Bering Sea Alliance, LLC
Unalakleet, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information about the Bering Sea Alliance, LLC (BSA).

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:15:13 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR LESIL MCGUIRE called the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Stevens, Olson, Coghill, Co-Chair Giessel, and Co-Chair McGuire.

HCR 5-DECLARE 2015-2017 AS YEARS OF THE ARCTIC

[8:16:17 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE announced the consideration of HCR 5. [CSHCR 5(EDA)AM was before the committee.]

[8:16:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BOB HERRON, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of HCR 5, declaring 2015-2107 as Years of the Arctic, said the resolution is appropriate because on April 24, 2015, Alaska

assumes the Chair of the Arctic Council until April 2017. Specifically, the resolution resolves that the Years of the Arctic is a period during which Alaska should make every effort to highlight the importance of the Arctic to Alaskans and Americans. The legislature encourages the state and its partners to work with the Institute of the North in encouraging the state to promote its Arctic policy and increase Arctic awareness. The legislature also encourages the state to promote its Arctic policy during this period and to address the strategic recommendations found in the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission Implementation Plan.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE noted that CSHCR 5(EDA)AM was before the committee.

NILS ANDREASSEN, Executive Director, Institute of the North, testified in support of HCR 5. He related that the next two years are an especially important time for Alaska and for the nation. During the U.S. chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the state has an opportunity to declare its leadership, both from a policy perspective and as citizens and active participants in the Circumpolar North. He concluded that the resolution sends the right message.

[8:19:51 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE thanked Mr. Andreassen and noted the arrival of Senator Hoffman.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE asked about the Senior Arctic Official (SAO) meetings and the intention to have as many of the meetings as possible in Alaska over the next two years. She suggested mentioning this in HCR 5. She also suggested including the creation of an Arctic host committee to support and welcome the SAO's over the next two years.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON said that there are two SAO meetings every year, one in the spring and one in the fall. He understood that the State Department is going to hold all of those meetings in Alaska. Most of the other eight working groups will be held in Alaska. He thought it wouldn't hurt to add her suggestions.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE proposed Conceptual Amendment 1 - Whereas, we encourage the State Department to continue working with us to hold as many of the Senior Arctic Official meetings in Alaska during the next two years. There being no objection, Conceptual Amendment 1 was adopted.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE proposed Conceptual Amendment 2 - Whereas, it is the intent of the state to organize a host committee to welcome Senior Arctic Officials and other Arctic diplomats that will be coming to Alaska during the next two years.

She said it would be a means of coalescing around a goal to have a host group that is representative of the business community, indigenous populations, lawmakers, and the executive branch to help set the agenda where possible.

[8:23:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL voiced concern about a possible fiscal note.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON stated that the Governor and his special assistant are already planning for that and have requested funds to do so. He suggested that the resolution could say that the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic and the House Arctic Committee could be ex-officio members of the host committee and there would be no need for a fiscal note. That would show support for the Governor's efforts and the committees could have supporting roles.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE reworded Conceptual Amendment 2 to say that the State Senate Special Committee on the Arctic and the House Special Committee on the Arctic and Economic Development would like to join the Governor's efforts as ex-officio members of the host committee. There being no objection, Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted.

[8:26:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE closed public testimony.

CO-CHAIR GIESSEL moved to report CSHCR 5(EDA)AM, version 29-LS0562\H.A, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, SCS CSHRC 5(ARC) was reported from the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE said she would set up a press availability when the Governor signs the three Arctic-related bills.

PRESENTATION: Bering Sea Alliance

[8:28:14 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE introduced Mr. Art Ivanoff from the Bering Sea Alliance.

[8:28:20 AM](#)

ART IVANOFF, CEO, Bering Sea Alliance, LLC, presented information about the Bering Sea Alliance, LLC (BSA). He described BSA as an alliance of seven village corporations: Sivugaq, Inc., in Gambell, Wales Native Corporation, Nome Native Corporation, Golovin Native Corporation, Unalakleet Native Corporation, Stebbins Native Corporation, and St. Michael Native Corporation. He said they held a Bering Strait Village Corporation Economic Summit in 2012 in Nome, with representatives from various entities from government, businesses, and oil companies. They set a goal to make a difference in the Arctic collectively and endorsed development proposals. They contracted Arctic Response Service and sought rapid response training for oil spills.

He thanked the Arctic Policy Planning Commission for their hard work.

[8:30:42 AM](#)

MR. IVANOFF spoke of a letter BSA wrote to Senator Olson conveying their legislative priorities: runway improvements, oil response depots, and improved connectivity. He spoke of a report that was released in October of 2014 by the Statewide Broadband Task Force which identified connectivity problems in bush Alaska. He maintained that their area is short-changed in terms of technology and connectivity. The goal is for BSA to be part of the solution.

He turned to the subject of oil response depots. He spoke of BSA's relationship with Shell Oil. He related the suggestion of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management that it is the private sector needs to address oil response capacity. He disagreed and said it should be a private/public partnership and consist of private, state, and federal funding.

He addressed the problems with runway systems. Gambel is located strategically and could provide support as first responders, search and rescue, and oil response. He said resources were set aside by DOT for improving Gambel's airport infrastructure. He noted they are proposing an amendment to the funding request in order to expand the runway for jet service.

[8:34:23 AM](#)

MR. IVANOFF concluded that on May 6 and 7, 2015, BSA will host the Arctic Resource Development and Infrastructure Session in Gambel. He stressed the importance of partners experiencing what real Alaskans go through. He pointed out that BSA has been

working with the University of Alaska - Fairbanks, and the University of California - Santa Barbara, to bring their message to policy makers in D.C. He said the process of improving Arctic infrastructure needs to be driven by Alaskans and to have a broad range of Alaskans in order to make a difference. He concluded that BSA's theme is empowerment through collaboration.

[8:36:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE looked forward to receiving an invitation to Gamble. She asked if the UAF working group has traveled to D.C.

MR. IVANOFF said they have had several conference calls with the universities. Currently, the group of people is small. He said fragmented groups don't carry a message as well as a unified group.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE agreed. She recalled when a group went to D.C. and found that legislators from other states did not know much about Alaska.

[8:38:24 AM](#)

SENATOR OLSON asked if other communities north of the Straits will join the alliance.

MR. INVANOFF said there is an open door policy now. He stressed the importance of inclusion. He said they have recruited in nearby villages, but there were no takers. He said BSA stands at seven members currently.

[8:39:34 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE requested a map be included in the packet to D.C.

MR. IVANOFF agreed. He stressed the need for appropriations in order to build the infrastructure.

[8:40:43 AM](#)

SENATOR OLSON emphasized the invitation to Gamble.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE agreed it would be a wonderful opportunity.

MR. IVANOFF noted there is a lodge in Gamble. He described the response to a meeting held last August and the greatly appreciated hospitality.

CO-CHAIR MCGUIRE thanked Mr. Ivanoff.

8:42:11 AM

There being nothing further to come before the committee, Co-Chair McGuire adjourned the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic at 8:42 p.m.