

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARCTIC POLICY,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

March 7, 2017

11:36 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Dean Westlake, Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Gary Knopp  
Representative Mark Neuman  
Representative David Talerico

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Chris Tuck

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION(S): INSTITUTE OF THE NORTH

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

NILS ANDREASSEN  
Executive Director  
Institute of the North  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered a PowerPoint presentation as to the Institute of the North.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[11:36:00 AM](#)

**CHAIR DEAN WESTLAKE** called the House Special Committee on Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism meeting to order at 11:36 p.m. Representatives Edgmon, Josephson, Knopp, Neuman, Talerico, and Westlake were present at the call to order.

**PRESENTATION(S) : BY NILS ANDREASSEN, INSTITUTE OF THE NORTH**

[11:37:03 AM](#)

CHAIR WESTLAKE announced that the only order of business would be a PowerPoint presentation by Nils Andreassen on the Institute of the North. He pointed out that the Arctic policy is important to the entire global community, including the United States of America, which chaired the Arctic Council for the past two years. He added that Alaska makes the United State an Arctic Nation. The state has recognized the importance of Arctic Policy for several years and formed the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, and that commission submitted its final report two years ago with specific recommendation on how to implement a robust Arctic Policy. This resulted in Alaska passing its own Arctic Policy two years ago and it focuses on resource development, healthy communities, response capacity, and inclusive decision making in Alaska-centric science and research. With all of the opportunities in the Arctic, there are also challenges, and Alaska has faced some of these challenges for years and some challenges will be new.

[11:39:19 AM](#)

NILS ANDREASSEN, Executive Director, Institute of The North, turned to slide 1, and advised that the Institute of The North is the center for Arctic Policy, and in that role, it works to convene critical conversations, develop strategies on behalf of the state, work to improve the quality of life for citizens, and inform public opinion.

[11:40:20 AM](#)

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slides 2-5, and advised that the institute looks at the Arctic from a number of different lens, but often through socio-political or socio-economic lens. In a recent publication, Arctic Book Overview, the Institute of the North split the state into the four following regions: High Arctic is defined by some of the oil and gas development that takes place on the North Slope; Arctic is defined by some of the mineral developments and maritime activities that take place through the Bering Straits; Low Arctic include most of the Aleutians and Western Alaska which is defined by maritime especially, and also the fisheries activity, and shipping that takes place in that region; and, the Near Arctic where the bulk of the population lives and have financial economic, political, and academic capitols. He opined that while the institute split

the state into four regions, it is true they are intra-connected and inter-dependent.

[11:41:51 AM](#)

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 6, and said the slide is a quick highlight of some of the maritime, ground transportation or lack thereof, port infrastructure, aviation, and communications in place.

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 7, and advised it is a collection of the safety and response assets that are pulled together from federal, state, non-governmental, and other entities. The map depicts that Alaska has quite a bit of response capacity in place where there is greater human activity or economic activity. Certainly, he said, there are gaps in some portions of the state, but also less activity and less risk.

MR. ANDREASSEN opined that the members had received the Arctic Book and Overview and described it as a value resource for the state and the legislature. He noted that it does a good job of introducing Alaskans, and visitors to the state, to the Arctic Region.

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slides 8-9, and advised that in addition to the publication, the Institute of the North worked for quite a while with the Arctic Council, such as, the Arctic Energy Atlas which will be a web-based energy atlas, much like the Alaska Renewable Atlas, and will include resource potential for wind, hydro, solar, geothermal biomass, and tidal. It will have a community energy production consumption and efficiency database, best practices guide, and a list of community energy stories.

[11:44:03 AM](#)

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slides 10-12, and said this has been a good project period in connecting with data and centers, ministries of energy from around the Arctic, and working with them to collect the data necessary for the Arctic Renewable Energy Atlas. He advised that slide 10 contains sample pictures that at some point will have a truly circumpolar vision of what renewable energy in the region looks like, as well as what the communities are facing. Slide 12, he said, depicts a brief map reviewing the community capacity and off-grid settlements in all eight Arctic nations.

[11:44:44 AM](#)

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 13, and advised the slide depicts a project that will continue into the Finnish chairmanship, and by 2019, the Arctic can "really redefine itself" as a renewable energy leader and change some of the narrative around other priorities that have been discussed with regard to the Arctic. It is important for the state to be aware of just how much capacity Alaska has to be advancing renewable energy leadership. It is in Alaska where there is a great selection of subject matter expertise, data, and the opportunity to export "some of this to other nations around the Arctic and world."

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slides 14-15, and noted that following up on the energy theme, the Institute of the North has also been the organizer of the Arctic Energy Summit which in 2015 took place in Fairbanks, Alaska. September of this year, Helsinki, Finland will host the 2017 Arctic Energy Summit which will be a project of the Sustainable Development Working Group. He advised that more information can be found at ArcticEnergySummit.com.

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MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 16, and advised that the approach for the Arctic Energy Summit is truly cross-disciplinary. Plenary sessions will offer glimpses at the global energy outlook, climate change, sustainable developments, transportation, and the opportunity for local and regional governments to advance the development of energy resources.

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slides 17-18, and advised that the following issues will be addressed: renewable energy issues of affordability, opportunities to mobilize investment, map renewable energy potential, renewable technologies, examine the role of an energy within remote and off-grid communities, microgrid technologies which Alaska is well known for with regard to its (indisc.) leadership, but also capacity building and how "we look at utility operations" within Alaska and around the Arctic.

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MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 18-19, and said the session will review petroleum related activities of which Alaska has shown good leadership in all of these, and how it works between sectors and cooperates on oil and gas development, works toward

carbon intervention and mitigation, and how oil and gas development supports the economic development of communities and the state.

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 20, and said that the Arctic Energy Summit will examine, in consultation and stakeholder engagement, opportunities for a different kind of benefit sharing, intersection with environmental impact assessments, and food security which is an ongoing conversation in Alaska.

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 21, and advised that the outcomes from the Arctic Energy Summit will be a summary report looking at best practices, potential projects, and research gaps. It will include some strategic planning as it relates to affordability, renewables policy, funding, and an intersection between oil, gas, and climate.

[11:48:09 AM](#)

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slides 22-26, and referred to his mention of risk and preparedness, and noted that the PPR Working Group of the Arctic Council and the Institute of the North have been involved in oil spill preparedness in small communities. This project should be completed this year and will be public at the conclusion of the United States chairmanship having examined within 350 different communities and a local government's approach to preparedness and risk. A survey was sent out to these communities with 88 different questions and the early results from Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, and Finland reveal that most communities across the Arctic are moderately prepared for the risk they face. Surprisingly, he said, no community believes it has had adequate training from Alaska to Norway. At the same time, he remarked, most communities did not feel it faced the potential for risk in any moment so the impact of a spill could be great for many communities, but most do not feel a likelihood of that risk.

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MR. ANDREASSEN noted that he is looking forward to the final project to come out from EPPR and the Arctic Council in May of this year on a web-based platform that will map out preparedness with each community and have a dashboard relating to overall preparedness, planning, training, risk, impact, and resources.

[11:50:17 AM](#)

MR. ANDREASSEN turned to slide 27, and advised that in addition to some of the Institute of the North's current work related to the Arctic Council, it has been assisting the state with its re-joining of the Northern Forum. Alaska membership is crucial for that body in order to continue sub-national cooperation around the region. He said that he is looking forward to the Council of Northern Regional Government's forum, which is a great way for Alaska to showcase some of its best practices, but also learn from other regions. The Institute of the North is working toward a Council of Northern Regional Governments that would span North America and connect the State of Alaska to Northern Canadian Territories and the regional governments within Greenland. The Institute of the North has been secretariat these last two years of the Alaska Arctic Council host committee, convened by Governor Bill Walker, comprised of 75 Alaska leaders across the state. Future projects within the Arctic Council the Institute of the North hopes to continue stay involved with would be the Environmental Impact Assessment project lead by Finland, and potentially a workshop on indigenous consultation in Alaska in November.

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MR. ANDREASSEN advised that the Institute of the North is working with the Arctic Economic Council on an Arctic Business Directory that will evaluate Arctic competencies within the state, and also in all eight nations. Recently, the Institute of the North has been involved in the development of a task force on Norway-Alaska cooperation. He described this as a 20-year history with the Institute of the North and circum-polar relationships that benefit the state, it is able to bring Alaskan expertise not only to Arctic Council projects, but to Alaska's partners across the Arctic. He remarked that it is hoped that in the coming years the Arctic Council host committee transitions into an Alaska Arctic coordinating committee public-private partnership which would include, legislative members, public officials, private sector, and organizational partners from around the state to continue to advance Alaska's priorities within the region.

[11:55:04 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee On Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism meeting was adjourned at 11:55 p.m.