

**SJR**

**17**

<TARGET><BILL>SJR 17</BILL><SUBJECT>SJR  
17</SUBJECT><COMM>SSTA28</COMM></TARGET>

# Alaska State Legislature

**Session:**  
State Capitol 103  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: (907) 465-2995  
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**Rules Committee**



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**Committee on Committees**

## Senator Lesil McGuire

**TO:** Senator Dyson, Chair  
Senate State Affairs Committee

**FROM:** Senator McGuire, Chair  
Senate Rules Committee *LM*

**DATE:** 2-28-2014

**SUBJECT:** SJR 17, Arctic Council

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Chairman Dyson,

I respectfully request scheduling of SJR 17, "Urging the United States Department of State to consider the priorities of the state while it holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council; requesting that the United States Department of State work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council; and supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission" be scheduled for a hearing in the Senate State Affairs Committee at your earliest convenience.

Attached is a bill packet that contains the following:

1. SJR 17 version A
2. SJR 17 Sponsor Statement
3. SJR 17 Supporting Document- AAPC Preliminary Report excerpt
4. SJR 17 List of witnesses
5. SJR 17 Request for Equipment

Jesse Logan in my office will be the staff contact for this bill. He can be reached at [jesse.logan@akleg.gov](mailto:jesse.logan@akleg.gov) or his direct phone is 465-5159. Please call if you have any questions.

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Senator Lesil McGuire

## Sponsor Statement

### Senate Joint Resolution 17

*“Urging the United States Department of State to consider the priorities of the state while it holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council; requesting that the United States Department of State work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council; and supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.”*

It is important that Alaska and the United States priorities for the Arctic Council chairmanship align. SJR 17 asks the U.S. Department of State to consider Alaska’s priorities during its Arctic Council Chairmanship beginning in 2015, and to consult Alaskan officials before appointing an individual to lead the Arctic Council. The resolution also asks the Legislature to support the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission’s strategic recommendation in their January 30, 2014 preliminary report to: “Continue to pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in Working Groups and by building partnerships with Permanent Participants”.

In December 2012, the Governor proposed four sensible priorities for the State Department’s consideration for the United States to concentrate on during its Arctic Council Chairmanship: creating jobs and economic opportunity for Arctic residents; suicide prevention; developing safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for smaller, isolated Arctic communities; and safe, secure, reliable maritime shipping. The Legislature should work with the Governor and the Department of State to address these and other Alaskan priorities during the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

SJR 17 also asks that the United States Department of State “work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council.” It’s Alaska’s geographic location that makes the U.S. an Arctic nation, and Alaska deserves to at least be consulted in this appointment that will so greatly affect her future.

And finally, should SJR 17 be approved by both Houses, the Legislature would formally be on record as supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, including in particular continuing to "pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in working groups and by building partnerships with permanent participants."



## **PRELIMINARY REPORT**

**TO THE ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**

**SUBMITTED JANUARY 30, 2014**

**FROM REPRESENTATIVE BOB HERRON FOR HJR24, "ARCTIC COUNCIL"  
AAPC PRELIMINARY REPORT: GOVERNANCE AND INDIGENOUS CHAPTER**

## 260 5 State of Alaska's Arctic

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261 The "State of Alaska's Arctic" chapter is designed to be a stand-alone document that reviews and  
 262 evaluates gaps in knowledge, potential opportunities, challenges facing the region, and strategic  
 263 assets at the community, regional and state level. The Commission's Policy Teams were co-  
 264 chaired by Legislators, who guided the work of their teams to investigate the topic areas  
 265 addressed in the remainder of the document. *Note: these areas will be further developed in 2014*  
 266 *with significant additions and revisions based on subject matter expertise, agency input and*  
 267 *public comment anticipated and planned for.*

### 268 5.1 Governance and Indigenous Perspectives

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#### 269 *Introduction*

270 Good governance is the foundation and fundamental goal of an Alaskan Arctic Policy. Well-  
 271 established principles highlight some of the most important aspects of good governance in the  
 272 Arctic<sup>3</sup>, including a commitment to: economically and environmentally vibrant communities  
 273 through balanced resource development and respect for the environment in which Alaskans live;  
 274 sustainable communities that respect Alaskans' cultures, practices and traditional values; and  
 275 leadership, collaboration, and transparent and inclusive decision making that achieves outcomes  
 276 that benefit Arctic peoples and all Alaskans.

277 These principles are reflected in Alaska's Constitution, specifically Section 1.2 that states, "All  
 278 political power is inherent in the people. All government originates with the people, is founded  
 279 upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the people as a whole." In addition,  
 280 Section 8.1 lays out the policy of the state of Alaska to "encourage the settlement of its land and  
 281 the development of its resources by making them available for maximum use consistent with the  
 282 public interest," and Section 8.2 vests the Legislature with the authority to "provide for the  
 283 utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources belonging to the state,  
 284 including land and waters, for the maximum benefit of its people," subject to the sustained yield  
 285 requirements of Section 8.4. The Constitution also provides for varying levels of government and  
 286 jurisdiction, and provides for maximum local self-government in Section 10.1.

#### 287 *Background*

288 Governance in the Arctic spans international, national, state and local levels, but it is important  
 289 to understand and recognize the degree to which tribal governance and indigenous peoples exert  
 290 influence on decision making in the Alaskan Arctic. The U.S. is one of many countries with  
 291 indigenous populations that have inhabited the Arctic for thousands of years and includes the

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<sup>3</sup> Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984, Section 112

## Governance and Indigenous Perspectives

292 traditional cultural boundaries of the Iñupiat, Yupik, Siberian Yupik, Cup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan  
293 and Gwich'in peoples. Nearly 53,000 people live in the Alaskan Arctic, with more than 37,000  
294 people (70%) identifying as Alaska Native or 'Alaska Native and another race.'<sup>4</sup> Alaska Native  
295 cultures have distinct language, familial, historical, cultural and traditional ties to the lands and  
296 resources in the Alaskan Arctic and across international borders.

297 Alaska Natives are engaged in multiple arenas of governance that touch every aspect of the lives  
298 of Arctic peoples, including the Arctic Council, the International Whaling Commission, state and  
299 federal co-management of subsistence resources, borough and city governments, and tribal  
300 governments.<sup>5</sup>

301 In addition, the federal government has a unique relationship with Alaska Native tribes. Federal  
302 executive departments and agencies are required to engage in meaningful consultation and  
303 collaboration with tribal officials in development of federal policies that have tribal implications,  
304 and are charged with strengthening the government-to-government relationship between the  
305 United States and federally recognized tribes. Alaska Native Corporations<sup>6</sup> are also consulted, in  
306 part due to their role in land management, and this provides an avenue for Alaska Natives to be  
307 directly involved in responsible development of natural resources and to develop businesses that  
308 support these activities, on behalf of their people. This is accomplished in a similar way to other  
309 state and federal public outreach during review and adjudications of planning or development  
310 processes.

311 In addition to tribal governance, Alaska has unique local or regional government, all of which  
312 have important roles in governance. Unlike most other states that typically have local  
313 government structures consisting of many overlapping local government service providers,  
314 Alaska's system of local government is simple, efficient and effective. A city government is a  
315 municipal corporation and political subdivision of the state of Alaska. It generally encompasses a  
316 single community. Presently, there are 145 city governments in Alaska. Like a city, an organized  
317 borough in Alaska is a municipal corporation and political subdivision of the state of Alaska.  
318 However, organized boroughs are intermediate-sized governments – much larger than cities.  
319 Presently, there are 16 organized boroughs in Alaska. All local governments in Alaska – general  
320 law cities, home rule cities, general law boroughs, and home rule boroughs – enjoy broad  
321 powers. All local governments have certain fundamental duties such as conducting elections and  
322 holding regular meetings of the governing bodies. Beyond this, the duties of municipalities in  
323 Alaska vary considerably.<sup>7</sup>

324 The role of local government needs to be included in any discussion of governance because it  
325 will be Alaska's communities – particularly coastal communities – that will bear the most risk

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<sup>4</sup> 2010 Census

<sup>5</sup> See appendix – Tribal Governance

<sup>6</sup> See appendix – Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

<sup>7</sup> [http://commerce.alaska.gov/dnn/Portals/4/pub/Local\\_Gov\\_AK.pdf](http://commerce.alaska.gov/dnn/Portals/4/pub/Local_Gov_AK.pdf)

326 and potential opportunity, depending on geography and distance from economic activity.  
327 Specifically, local government will be faced with many questions related to increased activity  
328 and potential development in the Arctic:

- 329 • Does the local government have or want a specific tax code to address the activity such as  
330 policies for taxing oil field or mining equipment?
- 331 • Is increased activity going to adversely impact current infrastructure or utilities, including  
332 docks, electric, water and sewer and solid waste? Who pays for necessary improvements?
- 333 • Does the local government have codes to deal with the activity? Are there zoning issues?
- 334 • Does the community realize the impacts to social services that might come with increased  
335 activity?
- 336 • What are the environmental impacts of the activity?
- 337 • How will communities balance the positive benefits of economic development?
- 338 • How will increased revenues maintain community infrastructure and support schools and  
339 other educational resources?

340 Clearly, local government has a distinct and important role to play in the Arctic because potential  
341 and real activity will impact communities in ways that haven't been fully realized.

342 Governance at the state level is defined by the Alaska Statehood Act of 1958, which granted the  
343 state approximately 105 million acres of land intended to help Alaska develop an economic base.  
344 Alaska was also granted ownership of state submerged lands beneath navigable waterways and  
345 submerged lands up to three miles offshore, and was given the primary authority to manage fish  
346 and wildlife on all lands and waters. The state of Alaska is the largest landholder after the federal  
347 government and has responsibilities as such.

348 The state of Alaska has a constitutional duty to responsibly develop and utilize Alaska's  
349 abundant natural resources for the benefit of its citizens, and to safeguard world-class fish,  
350 wildlife and the natural environment. These mandates are primarily achieved through state  
351 agencies entrusted with natural resource management responsibilities. The state of Alaska also  
352 has responsibilities to provide for the health, safety and education of its people.

353 The state of Alaska provides input to federal decision making and activities through state-federal  
354 agency coordination efforts, data and information sharing, submission of formal comments, and  
355 litigation. The state has a formal role in several coordinating entities active in the Arctic region,  
356 including:

- 357 • North Pacific Fishery Management Council
- 358 • Alaska Ocean Observing System
- 359 • North Slope Science Initiative
- 360 • Arctic Landscape Conservation Cooperative and Western Alaska Landscape  
361 Conservation Cooperative

## Governance and Indigenous Perspectives

- 362 • Alaska Climate Change Executive Roundtable
- 363 • North Pacific Research Board
- 364 • Arctic Policy Group

365 In part to keep interested Alaskans informed about the Arctic Council, the Office of the  
366 Governor hosts a bi-monthly Alaska Ad Hoc Arctic Council Working Group meeting and  
367 conference call. The call brings a diverse group of Alaskans together with the U.S. Department  
368 of State Arctic Affairs Officer, federal agency heads of delegation to Arctic Council working  
369 groups, and the Alaska Congressional delegation staff.

370 In addition to the activities of the executive branch and state agencies, the Alaska State  
371 Legislature acts in many ways to support the residents of the Alaskan Arctic region, perhaps  
372 most notably through funding infrastructure projects but also through public bodies that focus on  
373 the region. The Alaska State Legislature created the Alaska Northern Waters Task Force in 2010  
374 and their final report has been available since January 2012. One of the report's  
375 recommendations was the creation of an Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC),  
376 subsequently formed by HCR 23 during the 2012 legislative session. In addition, the Legislature  
377 has passed several Arctic-relevant resolutions in recent years, including: HJR 15 "Supporting the  
378 Arctic Caucus" and HJR 19 "Urging U.S. Senate to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty" in 2011;  
379 and SJR 17 "Supporting the Arctic Council Task Force" and HJR 34 "Asking Congress to fund  
380 icebreakers and a Coast Guard Arctic base" in 2012.

381 The next level of governance to consider is the role of the national government. U.S. Arctic  
382 Policy is codified in NSPD-66, which includes the following goals:

- 383 • Meet national security and homeland security needs in the Arctic
- 384 • Protect the Arctic environment and its biological resources
- 385 • Ensure natural resource management and economic development are environmentally  
386 sustainable
- 387 • Strengthen institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations
- 388 • Engage the Arctic's indigenous communities in decisions that affect them
- 389 • Enhance scientific monitoring and research into local, regional and global environmental  
390 issues

391 On May 10, 2013, the White House released the National Strategy for the Arctic Region  
392 (NSAR), emphasizing three lines of effort: Advancing U.S. Security Interests, Pursuing  
393 Responsible Arctic Region Stewardship, and Strengthening International Cooperation. The  
394 NSAR is intended to position the United States to respond effectively to challenges and  
395 emerging opportunities arising from significant increases in Arctic activity due to the  
396 diminishment of sea ice and the emergence of a new Arctic environment. It defines U.S. national  
397 security interests in the Arctic region and identifies prioritized lines of effort, building upon  
398 existing initiatives by federal, state, local and tribal authorities, the private sector, and

399 international partners, and aims to focus efforts where opportunities exist and action is needed. It  
400 is designed to meet the reality of a changing Arctic environment, while simultaneously pursuing  
401 the global objective of combating the climatic changes that are driving these environmental  
402 conditions. The strategy directs the U.S. to consult and coordinate with the state of Alaska and  
403 Alaska Natives (recognizing tribal governments' unique legal relationship with the United  
404 States).

405 The NSAR will be implemented by more than 20 federal agencies that have  
406 responsibilities including resource management; scientific research; homeland security;  
407 emergency preparedness and response; maritime and aeronautical safety; and supporting  
408 communities. Many stakeholders in the Alaskan Arctic work closely with these agencies  
409 to achieve a wide range of management goals; these partners include state agencies, tribal  
410 governments and Alaska Native organizations, municipal governments, industrial and  
411 commercial interests, and conservation organizations. It is worth highlighting that the  
412 NSAR recognizes the state of Alaska as a key partner in its implementation.

413 Given the extent of federal agency involvement in the Arctic, coordination occurs through a  
414 number of inter-agency working groups – the Arctic Policy Group, National Ocean Council,  
415 Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, Interagency Working Group on Coordination of  
416 Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska, and the Committee on Marine  
417 Transportation – that meet periodically to review, develop and implement U.S. programs and  
418 policies in the Arctic.

419 Coordination between tribal, local/regional, state and national levels of governance is important  
420 in the face of increasing international attention paid to the Arctic. A critical starting point from  
421 which to consider international governance is the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council is the  
422 premier intergovernmental forum for Arctic issues and is made up of eight member nations, six  
423 Permanent Participants and observers. The state of Alaska supported the Arctic Council as it  
424 formed international agreements for search and rescue and marine oil pollution preparedness and  
425 response. The state has urged the U.S. Department of State to look to the Arctic Council to  
426 coordinate science and to inform best practices, yet asked that federal agencies look to Alaska  
427 when developing new standards and requirements for domestic land and waters.

428 Alaska is represented by the U.S. Secretary of State, the Senior Arctic Official, and federal  
429 Heads of Delegation. Four of the Permanent Participants represent Alaska Natives and send  
430 delegations from Alaska to engage in all levels of Arctic Council activities, with non-voting seats  
431 at the same table as Arctic nations. Canada assumed the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council in  
432 May 2013, and the United States is slated to Chair starting in 2015. The theme of Canada's  
433 Chairmanship is "development for the people of the North," with a focus on responsible Arctic  
434 resource development, safe Arctic shipping and sustainable circumpolar communities. In 2011,  
435 the Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement was negotiated and signed under the auspices of the

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436 Arctic Council and in 2013 the Council negotiated the signing of an Agreement on Cooperation  
437 on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic.

438 Secretary Hillary Clinton, U.S. Department of State, and Secretary Ken Salazar, U.S.  
439 Department of Interior, attended the Nuuk ministerial meeting in 2011, becoming the first  
440 secretarial level officials to attend an Arctic Council (AC) meeting. Secretary John Kerry, U.S.  
441 Department of State, attended the 2013 ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden. Increased interest  
442 in the AC has been driven both by changes in the region and by the international acceptance of  
443 the Council's role as the lead forum for international discussion of Arctic issues. Starting at the  
444 Nuuk meeting, by addressing Arctic search and rescue as well as initiating an oil spill response  
445 instrument, the ministers made a number of decisions that reflect and advance the growth of the  
446 Arctic Council as an institution.

447 By taking on increasingly important topics and negotiating binding commitments, the Arctic  
448 Council is evolving from a forum for discussion and technical assessment into an agenda-setting  
449 and policy-shaping organization. However, it should be noted that the majority of Arctic Council  
450 work does not result in binding agreements and that the Council is limited in the nature of  
451 binding agreements it can produce, as agreements must be approved through the domestic  
452 process of each member nation. For example, the U.S. cannot commit to major new requirements  
453 without Senate treaty approval (a process it has avoided for Arctic Council agreements). Of  
454 concern are any new restrictions imposed on Alaskans through an international body, especially  
455 when those restrictions may not have been supported by an open and transparent domestic  
456 process involving Alaskan stakeholders and domestic authorities.

457 In addition to the Arctic Council, the Arctic Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region serve as a  
458 forum for international Arctic cooperation. The Arctic Parliamentarians is a body whose  
459 delegates are appointed by the national parliaments of the Arctic nations. Every two years the  
460 Conference of Parliamentarians is held in an Arctic location. Senator Lisa Murkowski is the U.S.  
461 representative to the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, which is  
462 responsible for the work between conferences. In addition to supporting the establishment of the  
463 Arctic Council and promoting Arctic Council work, the Standing Committee has Arctic Council  
464 observer status.

465 There are many other forums for international engagement in governance, including the  
466 International Maritime Organization and the International Whaling Commission. Each deserves  
467 Alaska's participation and full attention as the Arctic receives increased levels of attention and  
468 activity; especially important for Alaskans to fully understand are the ramifications of ratification  
469 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The Alaska State Legislature is on record as supporting ratification and the Commission will consider more fully in 2014 the issues surrounding the Law of the Sea Treaty such as paying taxes without representation and potential limitations to scientific research.

470 164 countries have joined the UNCLOS, an international agreement establishing the rights and  
471 responsibilities of nations in their use of the oceans, and defining guidelines for businesses,  
472 environmental protection, and the management of natural resources within and beneath the  
473 oceans. The United States remains the only large, maritime non-signatory and the only Arctic  
474 nation yet to ratify. The U.S. Senate is responsible for approving international treaties and has  
475 yet to vote on UNCLOS.

476 The other four Arctic Ocean coastal nations (Canada, Norway, Russia, and Denmark/Greenland)  
477 have signed the treaty and are thereby eligible to submit their extended continental shelf claims  
478 to the United Nations. The state of Alaska has a long history of support for ratification, and  
479 recently the Alaska Northern Waters Task Force's (ANWTF) priority governance  
480 recommendation was that the United States Senate ratify UNCLOS. The ANWTF report  
481 included this salient quote from President George W. Bush: "[Ratification] will secure U.S.  
482 sovereign rights over extensive marine areas, including the valuable natural resources they  
483 contain. Accession will promote U.S. interests in the environmental health of the oceans. And it  
484 will give the United States a seat at the table when the rights that are vital to our interests are  
485 debated and interpreted."

#### 486 *Discussion and Considerations*

487 As the Arctic Council develops as an institution addressing significant policy concerns, it  
488 provides an increasingly useful forum through which the state of Alaska can influence Arctic  
489 policy. There are a number of ways to do this. Delegates from the state of Alaska can be invited  
490 to participate in U.S. delegations at all levels of meetings, task forces and working groups. For  
491 example, the state of Alaska provided a delegate to the U.S. team that negotiated the Oil  
492 Pollution Preparedness and Response Agreement. The state does not have the authority to direct  
493 PP activity but, some of the State's constituents directly influence Arctic Council policy through  
494 the four Permanent Participants representing Alaska Natives. The state of Alaska can also  
495 continue to provide expert advice to and review of the range of technical and policy documents  
496 created by various Arctic Council working groups.

497 Participation in the Arctic Council derives benefits to the state. The Arctic Council remains an  
498 important forum for exchanging technical information, and the state of Alaska can also benefit  
499 from the Arctic Council by continuing to contribute to and learn from this information exchange.  
500 For example, the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) is a project that integrates data  
501 from each nation into an Arctic-wide network. Alaska can also benefit from practical agreements  
502 that will help to protect the people of the state - the Search and Rescue agreement commits  
503 nations to minimum levels of response infrastructure to help save lives.

504 The state clearly benefits from the heightened visibility of the Arctic through the work of the  
505 Arctic Council. People across the world have become more aware of issues such as economic  
506 challenges, food security, health and social welfare, and infrastructure needs in the region, and

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507 this awareness can help the state of Alaska educate others, including the federal government,  
508 about our needs and goals.

509 Finally, the Arctic Council can serve as a forum for creating new requirements and rules that can  
510 help to protect the state. For example, the Arctic Council can suggest rules (or recommend that  
511 another institution address them, such as the International Maritime Organization) that address  
512 the safety of activities that take place beyond state or federal jurisdiction (e.g., shipping).  
513 Because there are a number of ways in which the state of Alaska can benefit from the Arctic  
514 Council and pursue its Arctic Policy, the state should continue tracking projects of particular  
515 importance to the state and contributing as a member of the U.S. delegations to the Arctic  
516 Council via Senior Arctic Officials meetings, Task Forces and working groups. The state and its  
517 agencies have been active in the region since statehood, accumulating a wealth of experience and  
518 expertise. Every state agency is engaged in work related to the Arctic. Some noteworthy  
519 activities with particular relevance to the Arctic region, and which might impact Arctic decision  
520 making, include:

- 521 • Conducting exercises and maintaining equipment specifically designed for Arctic search  
522 and rescue (DMVA)
- 523 • Engaging in oil spill prevention, preparedness and response (DEC)
- 524 • Monitoring of trans-boundary contaminants (DEC)
- 525 • Addressing rural water and sanitation needs (DEC)
- 526 • Monitoring, conducting research, and managing fish and wildlife populations across the  
527 Arctic region (DF&G)
- 528 • Documenting subsistence needs and providing subsistence opportunity (DF&G)
- 529 • Working with proposed development projects to mitigate impacts to fish and wildlife  
530 resources and their habitats (DF&G)
- 531 • Leading efforts to improve statewide digital mapping (DNR)
- 532 • Developing expertise in permitting and regulation of resource development activities in  
533 Arctic environments (DNR)
- 534 • Contributing to deep draft Arctic port and improved airport infrastructure planning  
535 throughout the region (DOT&PF)
- 536 • Coordinating and conducting project permitting (DOT&PF)
- 537 • Building capacity and expertise to conduct comprehensive health impact assessments to  
538 inform resource development activities (DHSS)
- 539 • Collaborating with the University of Alaska Fairbanks to study shipping and related  
540 considerations for commerce and international trade (DCCED)

541 Consistent with the core state government functions mentioned above, current statewide  
542 priorities that are as essential to the future of Alaska's Arctic as to any other region of the state  
543 include: resources and energy; education; public safety; transportation and infrastructure; and  
544 military support.

545 Indigenous perspectives are extremely relevant and important to consider when evaluating future  
 546 decision making. Given tribal governance capacity and sovereignty as well as the economic  
 547 capability brought to bear by Alaska Native Corporations, it is important to recognize the interest  
 548 and concerns of Arctic indigenous peoples in Alaska. The cultures of Arctic Alaska Natives are  
 549 diverse, however there are common interests and concerns about a developing Arctic. The  
 550 Arctic's Alaska Native communities have been developing solutions to tackle challenges  
 551 affecting the residents of the Arctic that include lack of infrastructure (e.g., transportation,  
 552 communications), high energy costs, public safety, high cost of living, and issues affecting social  
 553 well-being. The following areas<sup>9</sup> express a good representation of priorities for consideration,  
 554 though are by no means comprehensive or final:

- 555 • Food security – access to and utilizations of subsistence resources for customary and  
 556 traditional use – is paramount to the health and well-being and survival of Alaska Native  
 557 peoples and cultures
- 558 • Meaningful and direct inclusion in decision making
- 559 • Responsible development of natural resources and infrastructure that benefit the U.S. as a  
 560 whole and benefits the peoples of the Arctic
- 561 • Use of local and traditional knowledge in research as well as identification of research  
 562 priorities of Alaska Native communities
- 563 • Incorporating traditional knowledge when assembling information upon which to base  
 564 decision making and to encourage the use of traditional knowledge at all levels of  
 565 decision making
- 566 • Development of a ready workforce to participate in economic activities in the Arctic.
- 567 • Increased opportunities to develop local economies
- 568 • Ratifying the Law of the Sea Treaty<sup>10</sup>
- 569 • Continuation of traditional and cultural practices including subsistence hunting, fishing,  
 570 gathering and practice of language and culture
- 571 • Reducing bureaucratic processes that require engagement at many levels and which can  
 572 burden stakeholders and communities

573 In an increasingly busy Arctic, it is critical that Alaska strengthen and improve the structures,  
 574 processes, and practices that determine how relations among people are regulated, how decisions  
 575 are made, and the role that citizens have in this process. This includes utilizing transparent public  
 576 processes that engage stakeholders, lead to informed decision making, and hold decision makers  
 577 accountable. It must include coordination among jurisdictions, cooperation at all levels of  
 578 government – including international, national, state, local and tribal – with clearly defined  
 579 functions and roles, and balancing multiple values to protect, promote, and enhance the well-  
 580 being of the Alaskan Arctic including the people, flora, fauna, land, water and other resources.

<sup>9</sup> These touch on all facets of Arctic policy and development, as reflected in the Department of Interior report "Managing for the Future in a Rapidly Changing Arctic," the Inuit Circumpolar Council "Inuit Arctic Policy," and other documents prepared by local entities.

<sup>10</sup> Inuit Arctic Policy

## Governance and Indigenous Perspectives

### 581 *Conclusion: Policy Recommendations*

#### 582 Strategic Recommendations

- 583 • Continue to pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council,  
584 including involvement in Working Groups and by building partnerships with Permanent  
585 Participants.
- 586 • Develop, where lacking, and build upon existing programs to improve transparency and  
587 community/local inclusion in decision making through state coordination of multi-agency  
588 permits, state and federal coordination of permits and plans, and meaningful involvement  
589 of regional stakeholders in development activities or plans that affect them.

#### 590 Other Recommendations

- 591 1. The state of Alaska has had limited participation in Arctic Council activities as part of  
592 U.S. delegations.
  - 593 A. The state of Alaska should continue to pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of  
594 participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in Working Groups and by  
595 building partnerships with Permanent Participants.
- 596 2. There is a gap in effective communication and formal consultation between Arctic  
597 communities and other stakeholders and state and federal agencies.
  - 598 A. The state of Alaska should develop a program that achieves transparency and  
599 community/local inclusion in decision making through state coordination of multi-  
600 agency permits, state and federal coordination of permits and plans, and meaningful  
601 involvement of regional stakeholders in development activities or plans that affect  
602 them.
- 603 3. There is lack of information or centralized access to Arctic-specific information to guide  
604 governance decisions at all levels.
  - 605 A. The state of Alaska should facilitate the establishment of a clearinghouse of Arctic  
606 information that is useful for Alaska residents and communities.
- 607 4. Alaska's offshore and maritime interests are hampered by the U.S. inability to ratify the  
608 Law of the Sea Treaty.
  - 609 A. The state of Alaska urges the United States Senate to ratify the United Nations  
610 Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- 611 5. Alaska lacks clear and consistent cross-border information sharing and scenarios  
612 planning.

- 613 A. The state of Alaska should foster and strengthen international partnerships with other  
614 Arctic Nations, establishing bilateral partnerships with, in particular, Canada and  
615 Russia, to address emerging challenges in the Arctic. For example, forming a  
616 Beaufort Regional Business Council to work with Canada and/or a Chukchi Regional  
617 Business Council to work with Russia on shipping traffic and other issues.  
618

# Alaska State Legislature

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**Committee on Committees**

## Senator Lesil McGuire

### SJR 17

#### List of Witnesses

Stefanie Moreland, Special Assistant to Governor Sean Parnell, member of Alaska Arctic Policy Commission; 465-3500, 957-2576 cell

# Alaska State Legislature



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**Committee on Committees**

## Senator Lesil McGuire

SJR 17  
Request for Equipment

Hardware necessary for PowerPoint Presentation:

- Laptop
- Projector
- Necessary cables