

HOUSE BILL NO.

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

BY REPRESENTATIVE HERRON

Introduced:
Referred:

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) over the course of history, residents of the state have developed extensive
7 knowledge of the environmental, climate, political, cultural, transportation, scientific, and
8 other issues of the Arctic;

9 (2) over the course of history, residents of the state have been living in,
10 working in, developing, and preserving the Arctic region and, as a result, have become some
11 of the most knowledgeable experts on the region;

12 (3) with a few exceptions, state policy is also Arctic policy;

13 (4) residents of the state are at the forefront of the exploration and
14 development of Arctic resources and of circumpolar cooperation; and

15 (5) it is essential that both the state and the nation provide relevant

1 information about the emerging Arctic, understand and communicate the critical issues that
2 affect the Arctic frontier, and secure the safety and prosperity of the Arctic.

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

4 (1) not conflict with or subjugate other existing state policy, nor is it meant to
5 duplicate existing policy;

6 (2) guide the state's legislation and policy implementation and inform the
7 national domestic and international Arctic policy in order best to serve the interest of the
8 state's residents and the nation;

9 (3) set out a vision and direction for future Arctic policy; and

10 (4) be a mechanism to achieve the state's goals in the Arctic, including

11 (A) promoting the economic development of the Arctic region of the
12 state while being sensitive to the area's culture, society, and environment;

13 (B) strengthening the state's Arctic science and research agenda;

14 (C) addressing the infrastructure gap in the Arctic region of the state;

15 and

16 (D) ensuring a safe Arctic maritime environment.

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

18 **Sec. 44.99.105. Findings; declaration of state Arctic policy.** (a) The state
19 recognizes the need for a higher level of attention to and deeper understanding of the
20 Arctic. Increasing activity, change, opportunity, globalization, resource development,
21 a sensitive environment, and rich and diverse cultures now frame the Arctic.

22 (b) It is the policy of the state, as it relates to the Arctic, to

23 (1) value and strengthen the sustainability of communities and to
24 respect and integrate the culture and knowledge of Arctic peoples;

25 (2) continue the state's commitment to economically vibrant
26 communities sustained by development activities that recognize the need for and our
27 responsibility for a healthy environment;

28 (3) provide a safe and secure Arctic for individuals and communities
29 and coordinate with federal agencies on national defense obligations to enhance the
30 security of the state;

31 (4) collaborate with all levels of government, industry,

1 nongovernmental organizations, and tribes to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic
2 decision-making resulting in more informed, sustainable, and beneficial outcomes.

3 (c) The state recognizes the importance of

4 (1) respecting the values and perspectives of the indigenous people of
5 the Arctic, including their cultures and traditional ways of living;

6 (2) sustaining current approaches and developing new approaches to
7 respond to the changing climate that increase community resilience, adaptability, and
8 sustainability and promote health and social well-being;

9 (3) using a science-based, ecosystem approach and local tradition and
10 knowledge to manage the fisheries and wildlife of the Arctic for abundance and
11 sustained yields;

12 (4) direct and indirect benefits to communities, including employment
13 training, from economic activities in the region;

14 (5) collaborating with industry, local government, and federal agencies
15 and consulting with Arctic residents to improve the efficiency of permitting and other
16 regulatory processes and to foster a positive investment climate;

17 (6) attracting investment to the Arctic by fostering a competitive
18 business environment supported by strategic public investment in Arctic
19 communications, energy, maritime, and aviation infrastructure;

20 (7) strengthening disaster prevention and emergency response
21 capabilities through coordination of public and private investment for infrastructure
22 and equipment;

23 (8) enhancing cross-border relationships with Canada and Russia;

24 (9) supporting international cooperation in the governance of the
25 Arctic;

26 (10) establishing, supporting, and maintaining national, state,
27 community, and personal security and safety;

28 (11) building the capacity necessary, as part of a state-led,
29 collaborative effort, to conduct scientific and other research and to advance
30 technology that would confront emerging risks and expand the economic opportunities
31 of the region;

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(12) pursuing opportunities to participate in the development of federal and international Arctic policies and, during that participation, to provide state and local government knowledge and expertise; and

(13) employing integrated, strategic planning and consultation with the residents of the Arctic, including employing local and traditional knowledge for the purpose of meaningfully enhancing decision-making affecting the region.