

July 2nd Listening Session

Hosted by Liz Qaulluq Moore (chair) and Reggie Joule

Key Findings:

On July 2nd, 2014 Alaska Arctic Policy Commissioners Liz Qaulluq Moore (chair) and Reggie Joule hosted a public listening session covering topics related to indigenous peoples in the Alaskan Arctic. Key findings from this listening session include:

- Food security: Subsistence is inherently linked to the Arctic environment and indigenous communities. Maintaining stable marine and terrestrial populations is critical for sustaining Arctic communities both economically and culturally.
- Local capacity: Local communities need to have the necessary capacity and tools to respond to oil spills and shipping accidents. It is important to ensure disaster response plans are not just procedural and local residents are able respond safely and effectively.
- Inclusion of indigenous people: There is increased need for a seat at the table during the decision making processes. Stakeholders need to be involved in decisions that directly impact their daily lives.
- Healthy communities: A holistic approach is needed when looking at sustainable communities. Economic opportunities play a role in creating healthy communities along with efforts to promote cultural revitalization, education and public health.
- Climate change: Indigenous people are at the forefront of climate change. Efforts are needed to ensure communities can adapt and respond to a changing Arctic.

Individual testimony can be viewed below:**Reggie Joule:**

- The public encompasses many groups in Alaska, including Alaska Natives, rural people, Arctic people. Defining Alaska's Arctic has been tricky to define.

Jack Omelak (US Russia Bi-Lateral Commission, Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition):

- The Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition is made up of five groups. As Co-Management agencies it was important to come together to advocate for subsistence hunters related to search and rescue and safety.
- Food security is our number one issue. We are trying to work more closely with scientists, regulators and industry to learn the effects of increased levels of maritime traffic on subsistence users in the Arctic.
- We have been working on a harbor/water safety committee and have taken a main role. We felt that if the Marine Mammal coalition set up the water safety committee subsistence users would be guaranteed a seat at the table. In the past there was little advocacy for marine subsistence users. We came up with 11 recommendations that were important to subsistence users, mainly the increased proximity of vessel traffic to hunting areas.

- We believe we spurred the Coast Guard via our federal delegation to map the Eastern portion of St. Lawrence Island. We ask that speed limits are made and enforced, as well as oil spill and disaster response. There is not enough baseline data or history to understand how oil spills occur in the Arctic, additionally there is little federal money available to study the issue further.
- Too often these oil spill response plans are procedural and fail to respond effectively. Much of what we do is usually weighted against economic development. The development of these response infrastructure and mechanisms need to be in place regardless of the economic opportunities that follow.

Ukallaysaq Okeasik (Native Village of Kotzebue):

- I want to echo support for Inupiat language revitalization. Our language is changing and is in need of policy support. In increasing globalization, preserving our culture is key to maintaining our Arctic identity.
- Subsistence is inherently linked to the Arctic environment and important to preserve. It is important to help understand the environment and ecosystems in the Arctic.
- The colonization of the Arctic should be discouraged. The cultural, social, and economic impacts in the Arctic communities are profound. Emphasize de-colonization efforts.
- As policy we could look at the amended the state mining tax to ensure tribal communities have a direct impact from a development. Resource development should help benefit the local communities. Indigenous people need to benefit from development within their homelands. For example, Red Dog Mine road brings in lots of revenue for AEIDA, but little stays within the communities.
- It is important to make sure Arctic residents and stakeholders are represented on these commissions and committees. As a policy, co-principal research investigators based and living in an Arctic community. One Port won't be enough for safe marine transport. A policy that looks at multiple ports would better serve Arctic communities.

Commissioner Nils Andreassen:

- The increased need for a seat at the table for decision making processes. The policy recommendations have tried to emphasize a seat at the table for stakeholders. The commission has operated under an Arctic defined by the Feds. It's hard to separate the Arctic from Alaska, but we are sensitive to the complexity of the issue. How does location translate into capacity (follow up conversation)? Should we better recognize the relationship between food security and marine subsistence? Does this also apply to terrestrial subsistence?

Rep. Ben Nageak:

- There is a wide spectrum of involvement of indigenous people in the Arctic. Russia has pursued development without including indigenous participation. In Canada, development has worked closely with indigenous groups on resource and infrastructure projects. In Alaska, we are still trying to figure out indigenous populations.

Art Ivanoff, Bering Straits Alliance:

- We want to address food security. We have several villages that are in good locations (Wales & Gambell) that are in good positions to address oil spill and disaster response. It's important to be included in decision making processes and not let agencies make decision for Arctic stakeholders. We are making sure we have the training to ensure local individuals can help with the oil spill response. About 50 people completed our first training for oil spill deployment and response. Making sure we have the training to ensure local individuals can help with the oil spill response.
- What extent is port development market driven? There is an obligation from the state, industry, and federal government to establish a port for the benefit of Arctic Communities. Instead of leaving things to chance we need to be proactive and build capacity.
- Response from Rep. Guttenburg: The USCG is very aware of the lack of infrastructure. They have been very involved in planning and setting up infrastructure. The Commission is also working on setting up a way for the State to look an infrastructure in the Arctic that will outline what is preferred and how we can get it done.
- Extend an invitation to the Commission to attend our meeting on August 13th. The Department of Defense will be attending our event in August and will be discussing Climate Change and Defense.

Jim Stotts (ICC) :

- The state's policy is a very localized policy that looks at what is best for the state of Alaska. Alaska is part of a bigger group of Arctic nations and groups, and it's important to work together opposed to arguing for "its piece" of the Arctic. Multi-lateral coordination is key across the Arctic for infrastructure.
- We should also take our time and do it right. There has been a rush of Arctic activity, but these decisions lack baseline data and other essential data.
- The Coastal Zone Management plan was the only way local communities could be involved in the forefront of development decisions. The lack of a similar mechanism will create a sense of distrust among locals. Colonization is still going on. There needs to be a mechanism and a process that includes local people, it should be required not preferred or optional.
- Climate change needs to be addressed. Social issues (suicide) must be addressed.
- On the issue of food security is culture. Our whole way of living is changing, but is driven by the seasons. There are so many laws and regulations that inhibit the use for end users. Supporting the right to access and help manage subsistence resources is an incredibly important policy. ICC supports the sustainability of our culture. On the issue of food security is culture, it would be good to see a statement in this report that outlines the State's support and recognition that subsistence practices is a way of life that needs to be supported and that co-management of resources should be an option. Our whole way of living is changing, but is driven by the seasons. There are so many laws and regulations that inhibit the use for end users. Supporting the right to access and help manage subsistence resources is an incredibly important policy.
- Commissioner Moore asked if ICC has a definition of a "sustainable community" that would help the Commission in its work. ICC currently does not have a single definition of a "sustainable community," but does have a definition for "sustainable development." Sustainable development takes into account resource development, the environment, economic development and contributes to the

sustainability of indigenous cultures. Healthy communities are a harder topic to pin down. For our communities to be sustainable climate change needs to be addressed, social issues (including suicide) must be addressed as well as economic development.

- Art Ivanoff commented that increased economic development opportunities will lead to increased jobs for all, including young men (Inuit men 18-24 have the highest rate of suicide).
- Mayor Joule asked if the State of Alaska building relationships with indigenous people, especially since indigenous people have a direct line into the Arctic Council and their work. Mr. Stotts stated that the State does participate in the US delegation to the Arctic Council (Stephanie Moreland and others), however there is less outreach to the Permanent Participants. If the State wants to partner with ICC, it will need to make concessions on some issues. Lack of recognition of Tribal entities will also continue to be a challenge for Arctic communities and the State. If the State chooses to engage Tribes, that would be better.
- Commissioner Andreassen commented that he is encouraged by the scope of the comments. That there is a need to talk about “why” Alaska needs an Arctic policy and how that relates to the scope and authority/jurisdiction of the State.

Representative Isaacson:

- Agree that local government is the best government because it is connected to the people. People currently see opportunity, but lack control to take advantage of these opportunities. So, do we keep working in silos?
- People want jobs, but also want to control what jobs. Communities come and go, just like those near Fairbanks (Chena, etc.). Is the State of Alaska responsible for preserving the existence of communities?
- The State, as a means of settlement, looks to resource development. The State works as hard as possible to ensure that the money stays locally.
- If a local community refuses private investment (in an economic development opportunity), is the State of Alaska responsible to give public money to sustain those communities? Is that a responsible use of public funds?

Attendees – the 4 listed on right gave testimony:

Kate Blair, AOGA	Jack Omelak, Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition
Jes Spahler (spelling?), Shell	Ukallaysaaq Okeasik, Kotzebue
Betsy Baker, Univ of Washington	Art Ivanoff, BSA LLC (Unalakeet)
Patricia Eckert, Office of the Governor	Jimmy Stotts, President Inuit Circumpolar Conference
Denny Lassuy, North Slope Science Initiative	
Dave Palmer, Arctic ATC & Aviation Technologies	
Rep Doug Isaacson	

Bridget Wolgemuth, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

Barrett Ristroph, The Wilderness Society

Ben Greene, representing SELF

Helena Jacobs, Arctic Economic Development Summit

Margaret Williams, World Wildlife Fund

Lois Epstein, The Wilderness Society

Kate Wolgemuth, Governor Parnell's DC Office

Participants – Commissioners and Staff:

- Liz Qaulluq Moore (chair of session)
- Reggie Joule (co-host)
- Sen Lesil McGuire (AAPC Co-chair)
- Rep Bob Herron (AAPC Co-chair)
- Rep Bennie Nageak
- Rep David Guttenberg
- Commissioner Kris Norosz
- Commissioner Nils Andreassen
- Nikoosh Carlo, AAPC ED
- Rob Earl, staff Rep Herron
- Jesse Logan, staff Sen McGuire
- Tyler Belk, staff Sen Giessel
- Brett Huber, COS Sen McGuire
- Eric Van Oss, Staff ION
- Christine Hess, staff Reggie Joule