



## ALASKA ARCTIC POLICY COMMISSION

Co-Chair: Senator Lesil McGuire, Anchorage (907) 465.2995

Co-Chair: Representative Bob Herron, Bethel (907) 465.4942

For Immediate Release: January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015

### **AAPC Submits Final Report, Introduces Arctic Policy Legislation**

*Commission Members to hold press conference on Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>*

JUNEAU-On Friday, the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission (AAPC) will submit its final report to the Legislature. Earlier this month, AAPC Co-Chairs Senator Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage) and Representative Bob Herron (D-Bethel) submitted companion bills, [House Bill 1](#) and [Senate Bill 16](#), to define the State's Arctic Policy and is designed to guide the state's initiatives and inform U.S. domestic and international Arctic policy in order to best serve the interests of Alaska and the nation.

"The AAPC's work is even more critical after the president's assault on Alaska this week through his wilderness designation regarding ANWR and the blocking of drilling in many areas of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas," said Senator McGuire. "Over the past two years, the commission traveled all across Alaska to gather public testimony and hear from the communities who would be most affected by any Arctic Policy. What we heard over and over was the need for economic development."

"Through this report and legislation we hope to make the biggest impact we can on the future of the North," said Representative Herron. "Our goal is to ensure public safety and encourage economic opportunity. We also want to protect lands and waters of Arctic Alaska and ensure food security for Arctic residents. We are the ones who live here and we want to make it clear the Federal Government needs to put Alaska in the driver's seat for Arctic policy."

The Final Report, as well as HB1 and SB16, are products of the work of the AAPC, which has been meeting for the past two years and has held meetings and gathered public and expert input from communities across the state including Barrow, Nome, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Unalaska, Anchorage and Juneau as well as including testimony from numerous indigenous organizations.

HB1 and SB16 declare it is Alaska's Arctic policy to: uphold the state's commitment to economically vibrant communities while maintaining a healthy environment; collaborate with all appropriate entities to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-making; enhance Alaska's security by strengthening Arctic safety; and value and strengthen the resilience of arctic communities and respect & integrate the culture and knowledge of Arctic peoples.

The bills also ask the State to support and encourage consideration of the recommendations in the AAPC Implementation Plan. Including the following priorities: promoting economic and resource development; addressing the infrastructure and response capacity gap in the Arctic; supporting healthy communities; and strengthening a state-based agenda for Arctic science & research.

"The priorities, recommendations and lines of effort we set out in this report and implementation plan will ultimately advantage Alaska now and into the future to seize the opportunities presented by an emerging Arctic," said Senator McGuire.

"If passed, this legislation will help Alaska to become the leader it needs to be on Arctic policy, and to more effectively partner and contend with the federal government on shaping a prosperous Arctic future," said Representative Herron.

The Legislature also has also created two special committees to work on this legislation and other Arctic policy related matters. In the Senate, the Special Committee on the Arctic consists of Co-Chairs Senators McGuire and Cathy Giessel (R-East



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Anchorage/Anchorage Hillside/Turnagain Arm) and members Senators Hoffman (D-Bethel), Stevens (R-Kodiak), Bishop (R-Fairbanks), Coghill (R-North Pole), and Donny Olson (D-Golovin). In the House, the Economic Development, Tourism and Arctic Policy committee will be made up of Chair Representative Herron and members Representatives Johnson (R-Anchorage), Charisse Millett (R-Anchorage), Louise Stutes (R-Kodiak), Cathy Tilton (R-Wasilla), Dan Ortiz (I-Ketchikan), and Adam Wool (D-Fairbanks).

“Alaskans are on the forefront of new exploration and use of Arctic resources, and of new circumpolar cooperation,” said Senator Giessel. “Providing relevant information about the reality of the emerging Arctic, understanding and communicating the critical issues that affect this frontier, and instilling confidence in the promise of safety and prosperity is essential as Alaska and America move forward to ensure both.”

The 26-member commission included 10 Legislators and 16 experts from throughout the state who examined several areas to develop the state’s Arctic Policy including: governance, resource development, science and research, energy, planning and infrastructure, security, marine transportation, and fisheries.

Commission members will hold a press conference on Monday to discuss the release of, and answer questions about, the Commission’s Final Report. The report will be released on January 30<sup>th</sup> and will be available on the Commission’s website: [www.akarctic.com](http://www.akarctic.com). Senator McGuire and Representative Herron will present the Commission’s findings and work to the Arctic Encounter Symposium in Seattle on January 31<sup>st</sup>.

The press conference will take place on Monday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> following the Senate and House Floor Sessions around Noon in the Butrovich Room of the State Capitol. Attendees will include Senator McGuire, Representative Herron, additional Legislative Commission Members and other members by phone.

**WHO: Alaska Arctic Policy Commission**

**WHAT: Press Conference**

**WHERE: Alaska State Capitol, Butrovich Room**

**WHEN: Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Noon – Subject to Floor Adjournment**

**WHY: Discuss AAPC Final Report, New Legislation, and Special Committees**

Media or constituents who can’t attend in person can participate by teleconference at 1-844-586-9085. If you want to watch live, go to [alaskalegisature.tv](http://alaskalegisature.tv).

For more information, please contact [Jesse Logan](#) in Senator McGuire’s office at (907) 465-2995 or [Rob Earl](#) in Representative Herron’s office at (907) 465-5141.

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