

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

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FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY – this draft reflects the individual contributions of Climate Action Leadership Team members and invited presenters during working group and other meetings. It is not an official reflection of the state of Alaska's position on climate change, nor is it complete or comprehensive. This document will be deliberative and incorporate change and new input through the course of CALT discussions and up until a final draft is due to the Governor in September.

Introduction

A heightened awareness of the rapid advance of climate change in Alaska and the resulting threats to our communities, economy and environment prompts decisive action. The state of Alaska is committed to understanding and preparing for these risks that undermine health and safety, homes and facilities, businesses and ways of life. There is a clear need to increase resilience and to understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change that are already occurring around Alaska, including coastal and riverine erosion, ocean acidification, flooding and permafrost degradation. Our changing climate offers Alaska both challenges and opportunities that necessitate innovation and a vision for a sustainable and vibrant future. These solutions must account for and respond to the scale and speed of change, incorporate the best available science and Indigenous Knowledge, and consider the costs and benefits to this and future generations.

Climate change intersects with many aspects of life in Alaska and the resultant and significant uncertainty that confronts the state requires management and stewardship encompassing food, cultural and life systems, security and wealth creation. The necessary tools to meet this challenge must include climate-responsive policy, strategy, and planning that result in immediate, near term, and future actions. The state economy is – and will remain for the immediate future – dependent on extractive resource development, including oil and promisingly natural gas production. These resources are finite and contribute to carbon emissions. There is an economic and ethical imperative to pursue a transition away from a global dependence on fossil fuels and toward renewable sources of energy. The state recognizes its obligation to encourage this transition and increase resilience in the face of climate change, while also maintaining Alaska's economic viability. With a strategic, holistic approach, these aims are not in conflict.

The state's work with partners - including federal agencies, tribes and communities - will realign and create realistic expectations for an economic and energy transition, including attracting investment and financing for clean energy, technological innovation, and new industries. Alaska's efforts to reduce carbon emissions domestically fit within a broader global leadership effort but are entirely driven by and responsive to where Alaska is today, and where it can be in the future. The state will pursue partnerships and international cooperation with countries or regions of the world that demonstrate an established or emerging leadership role in decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.

Value Statement

Values and principles that reflect the unique nature of our land and people will inform the state's climate change policy. The state of Alaska will foster a collaborative environment in which it encourages cooperation with and between Alaskans that leads to durable and shared success. The state recognizes the clear imperative to take actions today that safeguard our communities, economies and ecosystems for future generations. State decision-makers

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

DRAFT 03.27.18

understand health in a broader sense as one that integrates human and ecosystem needs (a One Health approach), recognizes opportunities to include benefits to Alaskans, and acknowledges that the future will depend on our ability to adapt to the many threats associated with a changing climate. The state explicitly commits to incorporating Indigenous Knowledge alongside other sources of science and to using these values and different forms of knowledge to inform decision-making.

As the state moves forward with a strategic climate action plan, it will use values of equity, inclusion and justice, science and technology, and communication across local communities, the state, nation and world. Alaska's climate change policy and action plan will ensure that the benefits and burdens of our changing climate are fairly distributed across our state and our communities. The policy and goals are rooted in and responsive to the values held by Indigenous cultures and the many other cultures and peoples who call Alaska home. Identifying and achieving strategies that promote northern resilience and innovation is best fostered when all voices and visions are included into decision-making processes.

State of Alaska Climate Change Policy

Alaska will implement a comprehensive response to climate change – with healthy natural resources managed to promote the social, ecological and economic health of current and future generations of Alaska residents. Doing so will require the state to gain fiscal stability and economic growth that lead to public funding of critical issues related to energy security, food security and climate change. In the decades to come, Alaska's clean energy economy will be an engine for growth and Alaska a thriving center of entrepreneurship.

In furtherance of this, the state's climate change policy will serve as a holistic plan for the long-term resilience and sustainability of the state, including communities, local economies, and future opportunities. Specifically, it is the policy of the state of Alaska to:

- 1) Ensure safe, resilient, and healthy communities that are sustainable for future generations by taking steps that include gathering necessary data, supporting community, state and national risk and resilience planning, and implementing adaptation measures.
- 2) Take the steps necessary to diversify the state economy, increase energy efficiency and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including fostering a transition to renewable sources of energy, supporting technological and process innovation across all sectors, and increasing residential, commercial and public energy efficiency.
- 3) Identify climate change as a slow-moving disaster, the implications of which—both in terms of contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to communities and natural resources—must be factored into all government decisions and plans.
- 4) Make decisions that are based on adaptive management, the best available science and Indigenous Knowledge, and adoption of a One-Health approach that recognizes that people and their environment are inextricably intertwined.

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

DRAFT 03.27.18

- 5) Provide, leverage or obtain the funding necessary to ensure that the communities, businesses, and people of the state successfully implement the actions necessary for long-term sustainability.

Goals and Objectives

Policy Statement 1: Ensure safe, resilient, and healthy communities that are sustainable for future generations by taking steps that include gathering necessary data, supporting community, state and national risk and resilience planning, and implementing adaptation measures.

Goal 1.1: Provide a robust system of community risk monitoring, assessment and planning.

Objective 1.1A: Increase the availability of monitoring equipment to track and understand sea level, permafrost and other environment changes, as well as mapping, bathymetry and climate modeling research.

Objective 1.1B: Increase the efficacy and accessibility of available risk assessment tools in collaboration with communities.

Objective 1.1C: Conduct and support prioritized community and regional risk and resilience planning in partnership with local and regional leaders, and including strong public engagement.

Goal 1.2: Implement an effective, efficient system for implementation of community adaptation responses.

Objective 1.2A: In partnership with federal agencies, develop an implementation plan with associated funding in place for threatened and at risk communities.

Objective 1.2B: Incorporate best practices and Indigenous Knowledge into adaptation actions that include protect in place, community migration, and community relocation.

Objective 1.2C: Consider adaptation processes and technology an export opportunity, such that Alaskans are able to meet a global demand for climate change adaptation services.

Policy Statement 2: Take the steps necessary to diversify the state economy, increase energy efficiency and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including fostering a transition to renewable sources of energy, supporting technological and process innovation across all sectors, and increasing residential, commercial and public energy efficiency.

Goal 2.1: Reduce carbon emissions in Alaska by 2030 by increasing clean energy and energy efficiency consistent with current state energy policy.

Objective 2.1A: Increase the implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency standards on the North Slope and along the Railbelt, and invest in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures across rural Alaska.

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

DRAFT 03.27.18

Objective 2.1B: Update design and engineering standards to incorporate expected climate change metrics, work toward net zero energy public facilities, and implement a statewide residential and commercial building code that responds to regional differentiation.

Objective 2.1C: Increase the use of renewable and low emission energy resources in air, rail, road and marine transportation, and consider a ban on heavy fuel oil use in maritime operations.

Objective 2.1D: Periodically monitor for and report on emissions of GHG and the success of efforts to reduce emissions across the Alaska economy, government and communities.

Goal 2.2: Increase the value creation from blue and green economic activity and promote technological and process innovation within emission producing activities.

Objective 2.2A: Increase value-added blue economic activities (e.g.; mariculture, high value processing, and marine biotechnology) using clean energy.

Objective 2.2B: Support the diversification of the green economy to include tourism, clean energy and built infrastructure.

Objective 2.2C: Export technological and process innovation as it relates to carbon emission mitigation.

Goal 2.3 Develop an energy transition strategy that leverages current and potential oil and gas development for the benefit of increased clean energy alternatives, for different sectors and across an appropriate timeline.

Objective 2.3A: Promote and develop natural gas as a bridge fuel for export and for domestic use.

Objective 2.3B: Conduct a review of current energy use and cost by sector and fuel and develop a transition plan that reduces fossil fuel use over a period of time sensitive to economic and societal impact, with mitigation options in place.

Policy Statement 3: Identify climate change as a slow-moving disaster, the implications of which—both in terms of contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to communities and natural resources—must be factored into all state and federal government decisions and plans.

Goal 3.1: Increase public knowledge of climate change science, impacts and state action.

Objective 3.1A: Increase understanding of climate change, and its causes and impacts, at all appropriate levels of education (K-12, vocational, and university)

Objective 3.1B: Sharing Alaska's climate change story across the state, nation and globe, highlighting Alaska's significance as America's only Arctic state.

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

DRAFT 03.27.18

Objective 3.1C: Partner with statewide non-profit organizations to engage the public in dialogue and reviews of research and government action.

Goal 3.2: Climate proof state policy and regulations.

Objective 3.2A: Conduct triennial review of climate change-relevant policy, statutes and regulations to assess progress and consider updates and/or additional actions.

Objective 3.2B: Establish a Commissioner-level climate change leadership team (including representation from the Governor's office) for strategic planning and implementing actions to address climate change and ocean acidification consistent with the Alaska Climate Change Policy. Have the Cabinet Climate Team periodically report on progress to the Governor, Legislature and Alaska public.

Objective 3.2C: Sufficiently fund state participation in international climate change for a, including the Arctic Council, UN IPCC, and relevant regional meetings in the U.S., E.U. and Asia.

Goal 3.3: Collaborate with federal agency and other partners to implement effective government actions.

Objective 3.3A: Develop a "climate collaboratory" that establishes stronger linkages between government action, community decision making and academic research.

Objective 3.3B: Strengthen or create statewide network of local governments to share climate change and resilience best practices and resources.

Objective 3.3C: Advocate to and cooperate with federal agencies for appropriate programs to address research, adaptation and mitigation efforts, and within Congress for necessary financial resources.

Policy Statement 4: Make decisions that are based on adaptive management, the best available science and Indigenous Knowledge, and adoption of a One-Health approach that recognizes that people and their environment are inextricably intertwined.

Goal 4.1: Reduce the impact of global carbon emissions and from climate change on Alaska's natural environment and ecosystem.

Objective 4.1A: Maintain sustainable and accessible fish, wildlife and plant harvest, based on science- and Indigenous Knowledge-informed decision-making.

Objective 4.1B: Support research and response to ocean acidification, invasive species, and migratory species.

Objective 4.1C: Adopt a One Health approach to understanding ecosystem health as part of human/community health.

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

DRAFT 03.27.18

Goal 4.2: Address physical, natural, and social science data gaps in collaboration with local, regional, federal, and international partners.

Objective 4.2A: Develop robust research-decision support systems for natural resource management.

Objective 4.2B: Conduct the baseline studies necessary for community decision-making, state and federal management decisions, and risk assessment.

Objective 4.2C: Invest in critical and necessary marine, air and terrestrial data gathering equipment and infrastructure.

Objective 4.2D: Develop effective mechanisms for bridging Western science and Indigenous Knowledge.

Policy Statement 5: Provide, leverage or obtain the funding necessary to ensure that the communities, businesses, and people of the state successfully implement the actions necessary for long-term sustainability.

Goal 5.1: Increase the financing available for clean energy and energy efficiency activities.

Objective 5.1A: Identify and work toward long-term state-led financing of clean energy and energy efficiency (e.g.; Green Bank or other mechanism).

Objective 5.1B: Explore the state's ability to access or leverage Series A Venture Capital funds, reinsurance programs, and other innovative opportunities for funding.

Objective 5.1C: Apply funding from energy efficiency savings to renewable energy investments.

Objective 5.1D: Explore additional one-time or endowed investments that the state may lead, including focused attention to science and technology and emerging clean energy technology.

Goal 5.2: Implement community adaptation funding strategies.

Objective 5.2A: Mobilize private, philanthropic, state, federal and international funding sources on behalf of climate change adaptation.

Objective 5.2B: Institute a climate change emergency relief fund for related and anticipated threats.

Objective 5.3C: Facilitate long-term economic growth within low carbon economic development.

Goal 5.3: Develop a pathway to a carbon pricing mechanism consistent with domestic interests and global best practices, responsive to national trends.

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy
DRAFT 03.27.18

Objective 5.3A: Consideration of carbon fee and dividend program with reinvestment in renewable energy development and energy efficiency activities.

Objective 5.3B: Maximize revenue generation from current petroleum and natural gas development to support energy transition.

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