



# LAWS OF ALASKA

2015

**Source**

SCS CSHB 1(STA)

**Chapter No.**

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**AN ACT**

Declaring the Arctic policy of the state.

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**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

THE ACT FOLLOWS ON PAGE 1



**AN ACT**

1 Declaring the Arctic policy of the state.

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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) the state is what makes the United States an Arctic nation;

7 (2) the entirety of the state is affected by the activities and prosperity in the  
8 Arctic region, and conversely, the Arctic region is affected by the activities and prosperity in  
9 the other regions of the state;

10 (3) residents of the state, having lived and worked in the Arctic region for  
11 decades, have developed expert knowledge regarding a full range of activities and issues  
12 involving the region;

13 (4) residents of the state recognize the risks that come with a changing climate  
14 and emerging threats to ecosystems, as well as increased maritime activity, but are optimistic  
15 that the skillful application of expertise, coupled with circumpolar cooperation, will usher in a

1 new era of economic and resource development that will improve the quality of life for  
2 residents of the state;

3 (5) the continuing development of the state's natural resources in an  
4 environmentally and socially responsible manner is essential to the development of the state's  
5 economy and to the well-being of the residents of the state;

6 (6) for thousands of years, indigenous peoples have made up the majority of  
7 the inhabitants of the Arctic region, and their physical and spiritual well-being depends on  
8 protecting the bountiful lands, rivers, and seas of the Arctic region;

9 (7) it is essential for the state and federal government to strengthen their  
10 collaboration on Arctic issues, including coordination when creating policies and  
11 implementation plans related to the Arctic, as both continue to engage in international  
12 circumpolar activity;

13 (8) the state should maintain an official body authorized to further develop  
14 strategies and policies for the Arctic region that respond to the priorities and critical needs of  
15 residents of the state.

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

17 (1) be implemented through statutes and regulations;

18 (2) not conflict with, subjugate, or duplicate other existing state policy;

19 (3) guide future policy derived from the implementation strategy developed by  
20 the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission;

21 (4) clearly communicate the interests of residents of the state to the federal  
22 government, the governments of other nations, and other international bodies developing  
23 policies related to the Arctic.

24 (c) Nothing in this Act is meant to support, endorse, or reestablish the Alaska coastal  
25 management program that expired in 2011 and was rejected by state voters in 2012.

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

27 **Sec. 44.99.105. Declaration of state Arctic policy.** (a) It is the policy of the  
28 state, as it relates to the Arctic, to

29 (1) uphold the state's commitment to economically vibrant  
30 communities sustained by development activities consistent with the state's  
31 responsibility for a healthy environment, including efforts to

1 (A) ensure that Arctic residents and communities benefit from  
2 economic and resource development activities in the region;

3 (B) improve the efficiency, predictability, and stability of  
4 permitting and regulatory processes;

5 (C) attract investment through the establishment of a positive  
6 investment climate and the development of strategic infrastructure;

7 (D) sustain current, and develop new, approaches for  
8 responding to a changing climate, and adapt to the challenges of coastal  
9 erosion, permafrost melt, and ocean acidification;

10 (E) encourage industrial and technological innovation in the  
11 private and academic sectors that focuses on emerging opportunities and  
12 challenges;

13 (F) maintain a strong, sustainable fisheries industry and  
14 increase fisheries research and monitoring;

15 (G) continue to prepare the residents of the state for emerging  
16 economic activities by using multiple education and training opportunities and  
17 implementing state workforce plans;

18 (2) collaborate with all levels of government, tribes, industry, and  
19 nongovernmental organizations to achieve transparent and inclusive Arctic decision-  
20 making, including efforts to

21 (A) strengthen and expand cross-border relationships and  
22 international cooperation, especially bilateral engagements with Canada and  
23 Russia;

24 (B) sustain and enhance state participation in the Arctic  
25 Council;

26 (C) pursue opportunities to participate meaningfully as a  
27 partner in the development of federal and international Arctic policies, thereby  
28 incorporating state and local knowledge and expertise;

29 (D) strengthen support for and collaboration with Arctic  
30 Council Permanent Participant organizations that include indigenous peoples  
31 of the state;

1 (3) enhance the security of the Arctic region of the state and, thereby,  
2 the security of the entire state, including efforts to

3 (A) enhance disaster and emergency prevention and response,  
4 oil spill prevention and response, and search and rescue capabilities in the  
5 region;

6 (B) provide safe, secure, and reliable maritime transportation in  
7 the areas of the state adjacent to the Arctic;

8 (C) sustain current, and develop new, community, response,  
9 and resource-related infrastructure;

10 (D) coordinate with the federal government for an increase in  
11 United States Coast Guard presence, national defense obligations, and levels of  
12 public and private sector support; and

13 (4) value and strengthen the resilience of communities and respect and  
14 integrate the culture, language, and knowledge of Arctic peoples, including efforts to

15 (A) recognize Arctic indigenous peoples' cultures and unique  
16 relationship to the environment, including traditional reliance on a subsistence  
17 way of life for food security, which provides a spiritual connection to the land  
18 and the sea;

19 (B) build capacity to conduct science and research and advance  
20 innovation and technology in part by providing support to the University of  
21 Alaska for Arctic research consistent with state priorities;

22 (C) employ integrated, strategic planning that considers  
23 scientific, local, and traditional knowledge;

24 (D) safeguard the fish, wildlife, and environment of the Arctic  
25 for the benefit of residents of the state;

26 (E) encourage more effective integration of local and  
27 traditional knowledge into conventional science and research.

28 (b) It is important to the state, as it relates to the Arctic, to support the strategic  
29 recommendations of the implementation plan developed by the Alaska Arctic Policy  
30 Commission and to encourage consideration of recommendations developed by the  
31 Alaska Arctic Policy Commission. Priority lines of effort for the Arctic policy of the

1 state include

2 (1) promoting economic and resource development;

3 (2) addressing the infrastructure and response capacity gap in order to  
4 support the Arctic region;

5 (3) supporting healthy communities; and

6 (4) supporting existing and fostering new science and research that  
7 aligns with state priorities for the Arctic.

8 (c) In this section, "Arctic" means the area of the state north of the Arctic  
9 Circle, north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and  
10 Kuskokwim Rivers, all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean, and the Beaufort,  
11 Bering, and Chukchi Seas, and the Aleutian Chain, except that, for the purpose of  
12 international Arctic policy, "Arctic" means the entirety of the state.