

Challenges At America's Northernmost Border

Critical investment decisions
for national security, energy,
transportation, and communities







Arctic Interest and National Interest Become Synonymous at AFN Conference, *Challenges at America's Northernmost Border*

The April 16, 2018 meeting in Washington, D.C. marked the first time cabinet level Trump Administration officials sat down with Alaska Native leaders, senior U.S. military officials with Alaskan responsibilities, and Alaska's congressional delegation to discuss policy and strategy. This report with an edited transcript and photos is intended to provide the reader with a full perspective of who participated and what was covered. The full transcript and set of detailed presentations are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.

Open Letter:

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) under the leadership of Co-chairs Ana Hoffman and Will Mayo, in partnership with the Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the State of Alaska and U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the Honorable Ryan Zinke, were pleased to welcome leaders and decision-makers to this 2018 Alaska Day conference.

The purpose was to discuss the risks and threats to national interests in Alaska and the priority investments that will serve to help counter these concerns. Because of emerging threats, Alaska's place in our national interests is heightened and operations are changing. Critical resources must become available to meet them effectively.

This is not a new discussion. What is new is that the Alaska Native people are at the table for these vital discussions on national security and national interests in Alaska. We have continued to build capacity over the years and we need to be involved at this critical time as a trusted partner.

We are grateful for the leadership of the different critical sectors in this vital mission: the Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior, Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, and our full Alaska Congressional delegation – US Senator Lisa Murkowski, US Senator Dan Sullivan and US Congressman Don Young; Lt. General Kenneth Wilsbach, Alaska NORAD Region and Alaska Command; Rear Admiral Michael McAllister, Commander, 17th Coast Guard District; Admiral Tim Gallaudet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Major General Laurie Hummel, Adjunct General, Alaska National Guard, State of Alaska and many others. Top federal and state policy makers gave of their time and contributed in substantial ways.

From the Alaska Native community, we are grateful for the contributions of our two keynoters: Colonel Wayne Don, Alaska Army National Guard and Calista Corporation; and Michelle Anderson, President, Ahtna Inc. Further formal presentations from the Alaska Native community came from Greg Razo, VP, Cook Inlet Region Inc.; Richard Glenn, Exec. VP, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation; Melanie Bahnke, President/CEO, Kawerak; Gail Schubert, President/CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation; Wayne Westlake, President/CEO of NANA Regional Corporation; Jason Metrokin, President/CEO of Bristol Bay Native Corporation and many others.

The growing focus on national security, including strengthening relationships and working partnerships, investments in critical infrastructure, energy development, expanding and modernizing transportation systems, hardening communications systems and securing the lives and well-being of citizens living in the North, matters to the Alaska Native community as you can see by the senior participation of Alaska Native leadership.

Within Alaska, the Native peoples make up nearly twenty percent of the population, but the impact and influence of the Alaska Native community goes beyond our numbers. Alaska Natives are organized and active participants in Alaska, involved in every sector of the economy and life of our state. Spread throughout every corner of the state, our communities are a central presence in this vast land. We recognize the national and security interests. The challenges are substantial. The threats are real. We are committed

to doing the hard work necessary to secure our homeland and country. This conference with the Alaska Native people at the table is a critical first step toward what we hope will be a stronger and deeper relationship based on respect and mutual trust.

We acknowledge the capacities that exist today in our state. We are committed to growing that capacity and embracing our role in the nation's security and success. In our position at the forefront of these challenges, our commitment must be exercised each and every day, impacting our homeland and all our people. We stand ready to step into a greater role in addressing the most pressing challenges at America's northernmost border.



JULIE KITKA, PRESIDENT
Alaska Federation of Natives



ANA HOFFMAN, CO-CHAIR
Alaska Federation of Natives



WILL MAYO, CO-CHAIR
Alaska Federation of Natives



Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

We would like to express our gratitude to the Alaska Federation of Natives for organizing the event *Challenges at America's Northernmost Border; Critical Investment Decisions for National Security, Energy, Transportation, and Communities* on April 16, 2018 in Washington, D.C. We would also like to thank the Alaska Command and the State of Alaska for their participation.

The event provided an excellent opportunity to educate our colleagues and policy makers in the federal government on Alaska's strategic significance as the nation's northern landmass, and how that role presents both opportunities and challenges that demand immediate attention.

Looking forward, Alaska is strategically positioned to represent and lead the United States in the Arctic, bringing economic and strategic defense opportunities of which we must take advantage. As part of this process, we need to do more to create ways for Alaska Natives to address village safety, the high rates of suicide, and work to create healthy and sustainable communities with opportunities for economic prosperity.

We must also continue to work collaboratively to make sure federal policy integrates and incorporates traditional knowledge, to ensure Alaska continues leading America with the innovation we see every day in our communities across the state. Integrating traditional knowledge must be a fundamental part of our efforts to inform, direct and infuse Arctic policy with the voice of the Arctic's first peoples who know the Arctic the best.

With support from the Alaska Federation of Natives, we are also pleased to say that Alaska moved closer to seeing new Arctic icebreakers. Investing in Arctic infrastructure is an issue of national security, particularly as changing conditions make way for increased commercial shipping traffic and Russian military activity in the region.

Again, thank you to the Alaska Federation of Natives for organizing this event which brought focus to critical Arctic issues in Alaska. Gatherings like this ensure Alaska Native voices are reflected across the federal government. They help create and strengthen relationships in order to build a better, stronger, and more resilient Alaska for the next generation.

Sincerely,

LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



DAN SULLIVAN
United States Senator



DON YOUNG
Congressman for all of Alaska





**HEADQUARTERS ALASKAN COMMAND (ALCOM)
JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON ALASKA**

To the men and women of the Alaska Federation of Natives,

On April 16th, I was honored to participate in the Alaska Day Conference in Washington D.C. The event allowed me to emphasize the strategic importance of Alaska, as well as express my deep gratitude for Alaskan Command's continued partnership with the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Discussing Challenges at the Northernmost Borders is critically important to our Nation and the Department of Defense, as evidenced by the distinguished representatives who participated in the conference, including the Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Department of Interior, the Honorable Mick Mulvaney, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and Alaska's Congressional Delegation, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan, and Congressman Don Young.

Alaskan Command's mission is to ensure our homeland is protected and provides military support to civil authorities in the aftermath of a crisis. To execute this mission, I need the support of our trusted partners, and I'm thankful that we were able to come together at Alaska Day to further our relationships.

Whether you're an Alaska Native or a service member, we must continue to work together and ensure we are prepared to maximize opportunities and overcome challenges in Alaska's demanding environment. Our mutual success is dependent on our partnerships and the hard work of the men and women who call Alaska home.

We look forward to future successes built on the strength of this conference. Brigadier General Billy Mitchell, the "father of the United States Air Force," once testified to the Congress in 1935 – "Alaska is the most strategic place on Earth." At no time in history has this statement proved more prophetic.

Sincerely,

KENNETH S. WILSBACH
Lieutenant General, USAF



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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Colonel Wayne Don, Alaska Army National Guard, Calista Corporation

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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Challenges at America's Northernmost Border: Perspectives on Current Risks, Threats and Opportunities in Alaska and the Far North

Moderated by **Julie Kitka**, President, Alaska Federation of Natives

Lieutenant General Kenneth Wilsbach, Alaskan NORAD Region & Alaska Command

Major General Laurie Hummel, Ph.D., Adjutant General-Alaska National Guard, State of Alaska

Rear Admiral Michael McAllister, Commander, 17th Coast Guard District

Admiral Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D., Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

Greg Razo, Vice-President, Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

Richard Glenn, Executive Vice-President of Lands and Natural Resources, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

DISCUSSION



Colonel Wayne Don



Julie Kitka



Lieutenant General
Kenneth Wilsbach



Major General
Laurie Hummel, Ph.D.



Rear Admiral
Michael McAllister



Admiral Tim
Gallaudet, Ph.D.



Greg Razo



Richard Glenn

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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Challenges at America's Northernmost Border: Congressional Perspectives

Honorable Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Department of the Interior

Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator

Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator

Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative

DISCUSSION



Honorable
Ryan Zinke



Honorable
Lisa Murkowski



Honorable
Dan Sullivan



Honorable
Don Young

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SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

Mick Mulvaney, Director, White House Office of Management and Budget

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SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER

Tracy Toulou, Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice

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AFTERNOON KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Michelle Anderson, President, Ahtna Inc.

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REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Melanie Bahnke, President & CEO, Kawerak, Inc.

Gail Schubert, President & CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation



Mick Mulvaney



Michelle Anderson



Melanie Bahnke



Gail Schubert



Tracy Toulou

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ROUNDTABLE ON PRIORITIES

Moderated by **Ralph Andersen**, President & CEO, Bristol Bay Native Association

Wayne Westlake, President & CEO, NANA Regional Corporation

Jason Metrokin, President & CEO, Bristol Bay Native Corporation

Sheri Buretta, Chair, Board of Directors, Chugach Alaska Corporation

Margaret Pohjola, Board Member, Calista Corporation

Vivian Korthuis, President & CEO, Association of Village Council Presidents

Julie Roberts-Hyslop, Vice-President, Tanana Chiefs Conference

Mike Williams, Tribal Leader, Akiak Native Community, Steering Committee Member, Western Alaska Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Jaeleen Kookesh, General Counsel, Sealaska Corporation

DISCUSSION



Ralph Andersen



Wayne Westlake



Jason Metrokin



Sheri Buretta



Margaret Pohjola



Vivian Korthuis



Julie Roberts-Hyslop



Mike Williams



Jaeleen Kookesh



When you think about mixing the two economies that exist side by side in our state, when you talk about the economy of the wild resource way of life that is commonly referred to as the subsistence way, this is a very well-established economy in our state.

Will Mayo
AFN Co-chair

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ROUNDTABLE ON POLICY INITIATIVES

Moderated by **Tom Panamaroff**, Regional and Legislative Affairs Executive, Koniag, Inc.

David Kennedy, Senior Advisor for the Arctic Region, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

Robb Wong, Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, Small Business Administration

Mike O’Rielly, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

Dennis Lee Forsgren, Jr., Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dr. John Farrell, Executive Director, U.S. Arctic Research Commission

DISCUSSION



Tom Panamaroff



David Kennedy



Robb Wong



Mike O’Rielly



Dennis Lee Forsgren, Jr.



Dr. John Farrell

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CONFERENCE RECEPTION

Senate Hart Building, 120 Constitution Avenue NE
Room 902 – top floor with balcony view of the Capitol Building and the Mall

Keynote Address

A full transcript and presentation materials are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.



Colonel Wayne Don

Alaska Army National Guard, Calista Corporation

Colonel Wayne Don's keynote kicked off the day and was focused on the nation's 2017 national security strategy, which is shaped around four pillars of security, and how Alaska supports and complements those national security interests.

The first pillar is to protect the American people, the homeland and the American way of life. A layered missile defense system will defend our homeland against missile strikes. Specifically, the 2017 National Security Strategy highlights a layered missile defense capability which acts to defend the homeland. The Alaska Army National Guard contributes directly to this homeland defense mission, as one of several states in the country with ground-based missile capability. The 49th Missile Defense Battalion located at Fort Greely in Delta Junction serves as one of several layers of defense against potential intercontinental ballistic missile and other threats from nation states who wish to threaten America, our citizens, and our way of life.

There's been recent action to increase the number of—or increase the capability of the 49th Missile Defense Battalion, and these actions to increase the missile defense footprint protecting the homeland, again highlight the significance of Alaska in our proximity to North Korea, China and Russia.

Number two, protect American prosperity. We'll rejuvenate the American economy for the benefit of the American workers and companies. Responsible natural resource development will enhance America's energy dominance and stimulate our economy.

Alaska has always played a key role in energy security from the discovery of oil on the North Slope to our most recent agreements negotiated by our governor with China for liquified natural gas. In addition, the 37-year wait on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge will continue to improve our country's energy independence and security.

Alaska also has several other natural resource projects such as the Donlin Creek Mine in Western Alaska that will continue to play a role in the national economy and strengthen the economies of our state and the Yukon-Kuskokwim region.

Federal, state and local governments will work together with private industry to improve our airports, our seaports, waterways, roads, railways, transit systems and telecommunications.

The United States will use our strategic advantage as a leading natural gas producer to transform transportation and manufacturing. Alaska's transportation, our seaports, airports, waterways, roads and railway are critical needs to continue to enhance our strategic contributions to our growing security footprint and development of our energy projects.

The vastness of our state coastline and limited road, airport and seaport infrastructure will require cooperation from the administration, state, and private industry to continue to provide support to the national security strategy and continue to promote American prosperity.

Number three, preserve peace through strength by rebuilding our military so that it remains preeminent and it deters our adversaries and, if necessary, to fight and win.

Alaska has an Army and Air Force footprint, United States Army Alaska, and the Alaskan Command. This Army and Air Force footprint has and will continue to contribute to the global war on terrorism and active conflict areas in Iraq and Afghanistan and other parts of the world.

Recently, the Department of Defense selected Eielson Air Force Base to receive two squadrons of F-35 Joint Strike Fighters. This basing decision, along with other military capabilities, continues to reinforce strategic significance of Alaska and the importance of our state in protecting our vital national interests that have in recent weeks become even more important.

Number four, advance American influence. Allies and partners magnify our power. We expect them to shoulder a fair share of the burden responsibility to protect against common threats.

In this area, the Alaska Army National Guard plays a small but important role in what is referred to as the security cooperation program. The Alaska National Guard participates in what is called the State Partnership Program, where National Guard states that are partnered with countries who aspire democratic values and are formed within their military. Alaska has partnered with Mongolia, a country who has a history with some of our potential adversaries. Northeast Asia is a critical part of the world in an area where we have guardsmen in country working with the Mongolian military on issues of military professionalism as well as tactics, techniques and procedures for domestic response, something the National Guard knows plenty about.

More importantly, Mongolia has pledged soldiers as part of the NATO coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan, under the condition that National Guardsmen accompany them into country as advisers, a significant nod to the importance of that relationship and our contributions to that national security interest.

To prevail, we must integrate all elements of national power, political, economic and military. All of these instruments of power are present, and the Alaska National Guard is playing a small but important role in this task.

Alaska is in a key place for our country's security architecture and a key player in our country's national security strategy.

As we've highlighted the needs and contributions of Alaska, our requirements all touch the pillars of our national security strategy and our interests. And they require improvements in our airport, our seaports, road networks and basic infrastructure to continue to support the overall strategy and economy. Alaska has, over the years, assumed a key place in our country's aspiration for energy independence, in the most

recent developments within the last few months with our liquified natural gas agreements and ANWR. And several large-scale natural resource projects have the potential to continue to move the needle forward on our country's energy security and independence.

In a security environment, the United States has acknowledged the strategic investments our potential adversaries have made within their militaries. The U.S. must remain predominant to achieve our diplomatic and economic goals. This instrument of power allows our leaders to talk from a position of strength.

Alaska's strategic location and the country's investments in our security footprint to provide an increased missile defense, increasing air and Army capability will do much to protect our vital national interests.

In energy, energy dominance means preserving and enhancing the United States' position at the center of the global energy system, as a leading producer, consumer and innovator in the energy sector. Energy dominance allows us to boost U.S. competitiveness, create jobs and improve U.S. trade imbalance through increased exports of energy resources, technologies and service.

Through energy dominance, we will also provide stability to the global energy arena and help allies and partners become more resilient against coercion, using energy.

Alaska will play a key role in our aspirations for energy independence and security, and we'll look forward to continued investments from all sectors to continue to chart a course to make this a reality.



Alaska is in a key place for our country's security architecture and a key player in our country's national security strategy.

Colonel Don

Alaska Army National Guard, Calista Corporation

Roundtable Discussion

Challenges at America's Northernmost Border: Perspectives on Current Risks, Threats and Opportunities in Alaska and the Far North



Lieutenant General Kenneth Wilsbach
Alaskan NORAD Region & Alaska Command

You can get almost anywhere in the northern hemisphere in about nine hours of flying time, which is why Alaska is such a strategic place on Earth, from the standpoint of military power, because you can project power from Alaska, which is why we have a number of forces based there.

In 1935, Billy Mitchell, one of the fathers of the United States Air Force, said that Alaska was the most strategic place on earth.

You can see we have some sensors in Alaska, some radars that help us to defend North America. But when you think about the globe—and if threats were to shoot ballistic missiles at the United States, on the far left of that globe you can see Iran. And a lot of people, when they think of Iran shooting at the United States, they don't realize where the missile's going to travel when it launches from Iran. But you can see it's going to go right over the top of Alaska en route to perhaps this city. And so having the ground-based interceptors based at Fort Greely is certainly a very, very important aspect of the defense of North America.

We have a number of forces based in Alaska that defend the air domain, so we have the ground-based interceptors that defend in the space domain. On the ground we have forces that are designed to defend from the air. So anybody that might launch bombers or cruise missiles at us, we have the capability to defend those.

And we also have fantastic training airspace, which is also good for ground forces as well.

That range space is about the size of the state of Florida. Everybody in this room should know that that training airspace is a national treasure. You can't do the kind of training

in that space anywhere else in the world. Because of the size, because of the technology that we've installed in that range space, the crews that come to Alaska get the best training that they've ever had in their lives, especially when you start talking about fifth-generation aircraft. And these are the F-22s, the F-35s and so forth which are pictured there in the slide.

Those aircrafts require space to be able to fully exercise the capabilities. And if you don't have a large enough space, basically the crews are flying with one arm tied behind their back. The next closest type of range space that we have is in Nevada. It's not even close. And so the crews that have the opportunity to fly in this airspace, as well as train on the ground in this arranged space, are incredibly grateful for the opportunity. So we constantly have F-22s, tanker aircraft as well as an AWACS, which gives us a surveillance capability to defend the airspace. And so at a moment's notice, we have crews on alert

24/7/365. They'll launch, and they will go out and meet anybody that would potentially threaten Alaska airspace. And so that would be the defense of the air domain.

The United States military and the senior leadership of Alaska have noticed that Alaska is a really important place. And what we're seeing is quite a bit of investment in the state. And so not only do we have, from the Air Force standpoint, the 47 F-22s that are Alaska fifth generation, one of the most advanced aircraft in the world, in 2020, as Colonel Wayne mentioned, the Air Force is going to be installing 54 additional F-35 aircraft, which is the most advanced aircraft in the world.

We're spending about \$900 million of DOD money to install this aircraft in the state of Alaska mostly with construction. Once those F-35s are in the state, Alaska will have more than 100 fifth-generation, which is the most advanced fighter aircraft in the world, making Alaska the most potent and lethal air dominance platform in the world. There's no other place that has 100 fifth-generation aircraft in one place. And so once again, a strategic location that's manned and equipped to be able to defend North America, but also project force.



You can get almost anywhere in the northern hemisphere in about nine hours of flying time, which is why Alaska is such a strategic place on Earth, from the standpoint of military power, because you can project power from Alaska, which is why we have a number of forces based there.

Lieutenant General Kenneth Wilsbach
Alaskan NORAD Region & Alaska Command

Well, if I could change gears just a little bit and tell you about our environment. We are seeing quite a bit of change in the environment. And it really starts with the receding sea ice, which is impacting all of the Arctic. Because Alaska is an Arctic state, it makes our nation an Arctic nation.

In the last 35 years, we've seen about a 75 percent reduction in the sea ice. Basically the ice is not as widespread, and it's thinner. What we're seeing as a result of that is increased human activity in the Arctic, for one. We're also seeing some other environmental impacts.

But let's talk about the human activity first. So because there's more access to the Arctic, different nations are wanting to get into the Arctic for transit, for the same reason that we fly Great Circle routes. It works on the surface as well. And so we're seeing routes like Western Europe across the north of Russia into the Bering Sea, which used to take a month. Now they did it last year in six days.

There's also competition for resources like oil and gas as well as protein. China and Japan, Korea, Russia, they're all looking to get into the market, whether it be for fish, oil or gas.



example for Alaska, have lived there for thousands and thousands of years. And we continue to learn from those groups. And having them as a partner in my mission from military is extremely important to me.

In addition, Canada is another partner, so the North American Air Defense Command, NORAD, is officially a bi-national command, and we defend North America together.

We also have partnered up with a number of other Arctic nations. Two of them that

we have a fairly strong partnership with is Denmark, and really that's through their Greenland Command.

All of the Arctic nations around Europe as well as North America have common interests.

Major General Laurie Hummel, Ph.D.

Adjutant General-Alaska National Guard, State of Alaska

Events like this one are really important, because they're critical to ensuring that our message is heard, and the message is that the Arctic and Alaska are critically important to national defense.

The Alaska National Guard and the National Guard's motto is "Always ready and always there." In the state of Alaska, your Guard and its predecessor service, defending the state and the nation, predates our statehood.

It all began for us in World War II, and as the threats have evolved, we've modernized and adapted to meet them. And I don't need to reiterate the strategic importance of Alaska to a room full of Alaskans. No one knows better how activities in Alaska can affect Europe, Asia, North America, the rest of the world than we do...

As the threats facing our nation change, Alaskans will continue to modernize to defeat the adversary.

One of those major challenges—one of those major adversaries—is the changing Arctic environment and how that stands to complicate military and other operations. And last year the National Guard, along with United States Pacific Command, hosted, in Anchorage, the Pacific Environmental Security Forum.

We had participants from around the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, 11 foreign countries, and together we explored environmental threats to stability and security and possible solutions to these issues.

And one thing that we could all agree on is that change in the Arctic is a bellwether for change throughout the world.



Events like this one are really important, because they're critical to ensuring that our message is heard, and the message is that the Arctic and Alaska are critically important to national defense.

Major General Laurie Hummel, Ph.D.
Adjutant General-Alaska National Guard, State of Alaska

Summer sea ice continues to rapidly decline more quickly than predictions, and the result, among other things, is international tension to emerging commercial development and transportation routes that had previously been blocked by the ice cap.

Permafrost melt is profound and a serious impediment to Arctic infrastructure and engineering. Sea levels are creeping higher as a result of both ice melt and through expansion by warming. Sea storms are more frequent and more intense. The coasts are less protected by shore-fast ice, and both coastal and riverine erosion are increasing. Birds, fish, marine mammals and land mammals, which provide food for our people of the Arctic, are changing their nesting, mating, and moving patterns, as the habitats undergo rapid change. There are positive biofeedback loops, which mean that these changes are likely to accelerate in the future.

The trend toward seasonally open waters is driving increase, again, as General Wilsbach mentioned, in investment in Arctic oil and gas exploration and shipping and in commercial fishing. So economic cycles in periods of recession may temporarily inhibit these activities, but for the long term, the trend will be upward, in part due to the vast supplies of oil and gas in the Arctic.

As for shipping lanes, increasing population in the Asia-Pacific and the growth of the middle class and trade agreements have combined to create more competition and increased traffic. And as a result, transporters are hungry for faster and cheaper shipping routes that the Arctic waters could provide in the near future.

In response to these changes, many Arctic states are reexamining their military capabilities to operate. Some have moved assertively while others have been caught flat-footed and are now hurrying up on plans to build or rebuild their military Arctic capability and to reach out into the Arctic with force-projection.

China has not been shy in asserting itself as a near-Arctic power, a term that China itself has coined. Their polar-class icebreaker, the Snow Dragon, has traversed the Northwest Passage, and a half-dozen Chinese merchant ships have tested the Northern Sea route along the Russian Siberian coastline. Just last fall, China commissioned its second polar-class icebreaker, the Snow Dragon 2, and it's due to begin sailing in 2019.

Further, China has announced domestic partnerships to potentially follow the Snow Dragon 2 with more capable and Chinese-built nuclear-powered icebreakers.

If these hints weren't enough, in January of this year, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs unveiled China's Arctic white paper, which lays out its aspirations to become a polar

power. This is the only white paper ever announcing Chinese interests in a region beyond its own territory.

So we know the Arctic security environment is emergent and in a very early stage of development, but what we don't know is whether it will ultimately be predominantly cooperative or competitive. Based on recent assertive action by Russia and the reactions it is likely to engender, it seems increasingly likely that military competition will continue heating up. And although the Arctic states generally emphasize their desire to maintain a cooperative environment, several have made it clear they will defend their national interests in the region if it becomes necessary.

And so this is where we find ourselves today amidst uncertain and unprecedented environmental change within an international tableau teetering between healthy practices, like strengthening institutions for cooperation, like ensuring environmentally sustainable natural resource management and economic development, like involving indigenous communities and the decisions that affect them, and, on the other end of the spectrum, eight individual Arctic nations acting less collaboratively and more according to their own national agendas.

While we remain hopeful international cooperation will prevail from a practical perspective, we have to prepare for less desirable circumstances. So with an eye towards strengthening our stance, the State of Alaska has launched several initiatives to support our nation's priorities on homeland defense and homeland security.

Representative Young secured language in previous national defense authorization acts to incentivize service in the military in Alaska's rural communities. Prior to Representative Young's work, the federal requirements for travel reimbursement were so onerous, it dissuaded participation in an enormous part of Alaska, as we effectively were disincentivizing service among our rural people.

Being able to have an organized militia as diverse as our population and spread around the state so we don't have all of our eggs in one basket is a key component of readiness. So we thank Congressman Young.

As the security requirement of ICBM intercept at Fort Greely and the space warning at Clear Air Force Station expand within their increasingly vital missions, we are working with National Guard Bureau, with the Army Space and Missile Defense Command, with the Department of Defense's Missile Defense Agency to ensure our fore-structure is appropriate to do what we need to do.

And as the U.S. Air Force modernizes its fleet and stations F-35s in Alaska, as General Wilsbach talked about, we will continue to work with them as a key component of the best total-force team anywhere.

None of this would have happened without Senator Sullivan's success in including requirements in the NDAA and Senator Murkowski's ability to secure appropriate funding to see these requirements are met. And we thank both of them.

To assist the efforts of our Congressional Delegation in ensuring Alaska voices are heard when discussing the Arctic, the Alaska National Guard joint staff has secured membership

on the Office of the Secretary of Defense's Arctic strategy working group, and we also have membership on the U.S. Northern Command's Arctic capabilities working group to make sure Alaska's interests are taken into account when crafting policies and identifying requirements.

We also hosted representatives from nine other state National Guards at last year's National Guard Arctic Interest Summit which, was held in Fairbanks and also in Utqiagvik. At this meeting, we signed the first ever Arctic Interest Charter for the National Guard. This organization will be the primary developer for the National Guard Arctic capabilities and policy. We need all the help we can get to not only prepare for a changing Arctic, but to amplify the message that we are an Arctic nation, and we need to lean forward to secure our vital interests.

We have begun work with a number of partners on a pilot program to use the unique skill sets, authorities and domain awareness of the Alaska State Defense Force for Homeland Security missions that are problematic for Department of Defense Federal Forces, whether due to funding levels, legal authorities or the need for specific local area knowledge. This program will establish scout detachments in our rural communities and will enable even more Alaskans to serve their state and nation, especially those military veterans who wish to continue to serve. When successful, it will be a model for all other state defense forces.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention, in addition to all we're doing to ensure the organized militia is modernized and ready, that, like General Wilsbach pointed out, we do have America's premiere training facility, the Joint Pacific Alaska Range complex, which offers unparalleled maneuver space to the forces of the United States, its allies and partners. No other place comes close to providing the amount of area dedicated to combine ground, air and maritime training and maneuvers.

So across the state, our challenges are large. They're many, but they're not daunting. I've never been more confident in our collective ability as partners to anticipate and prepare for change and execute the appropriate actions necessary to build and maintain a commanding U.S. presence in the High North.



Rear Admiral Michael McAllister
Commander, 17th Coast Guard District

It's really my privilege to represent the 2500 Coast Guard men and women in uniform and in civilian clothes that operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in Alaska and in the U.S. Arctic. I call them my family. We're permanently located in 14 different communities throughout Alaska. Like your families, they're spread all over the place. We take a small unit approach to our operations, so our smallest is in Unalaska or Dutch Harbor, where we have a total of seven people, up to our largest base in Kodiak, where we have more than a thousand people. We take great pride in being part of the fabric of Alaska communities. We feel welcome. We hope we are welcome. But we take great pride in the service that we provide throughout Alaska.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the maritime threats and opportunities that are out there today and in the future. And I'm going to go a little bit beyond national security, talk about other types of security as well, because Alaska, as you all know very well, is really a maritime state. And so not only does our national security, state security rely on securing the maritime realm, but our economic security, subsistence and fisheries and other natural resource activities rely on safety and security at sea as well.

We have a pretty significant gap in our ability to maintain what we call maritime domain awareness or a clear vision of all of the activities that are going on in this very, very large area of responsibility. And the receding ice, as was described earlier, presents new potential threats with access to Alaska; and of course, as a result of the significant remoteness and the relative lack of resources, it's hard to—even if you know that those threats exist, it's hard to marshal the resources to adequately address them.

Of course we have continued oil and gas exploration, particularly in the coastal areas. And that presents the opportunity for spills that we need to pay attention to in the Coast Guard. We have what we call illegal, under reported, unregulated fishing that is going on around the state.

I would tell you our enforcement posture is pretty strong, and so U.S. waters, state waters are well covered. But our neighbors—and on the high seas, as a result of lack of resources—face illegal fishing.

And of course the increased traffic that my colleagues have already mentioned, and potential for not only ship casualties, but potential for subsistence conflicts which we try to work through and avoid.





... to engage with local communities throughout Alaska. And, you know, that helps us take advantage of traditional knowledge and allows us to work to develop the capabilities, capacities of local communities to be first responders.

Rear Admiral Michael McAllister
Commander, 17th Coast Guard District

There are 16 ice-class vessels being built by cruise lines around the world, specifically for Arctic and Antarctic cruising. There's definitely a customer demand for cruises in ice-covered waters.

Significant research in the U.S. exclusive economic zone, which goes out 200 miles, and then our Outer Continental Shelf, we see lots of research vessels from all nations in those waters. Many of them are focused on preparing for claims under the UN connection, the Law of the Seas, searching for oil and gas deposits and minerals as well.

We see an increase in adventure sailors. And so we see an increase in the search-and-rescue activity throughout U.S. Arctic waters. We have seen an increase in military activity in U.S. waters. And, you know, a lot of this is the growing military global presence of some of our peer and near-peer competitors, particularly in the Pacific region.

And as noted, there's an upward trend in traffic, about 140 percent increase in traffic between 2008 and 2016. And the long-term projections remain consistent, in that we'll see probably a two- to four-time increase in that traffic by 2025, depending on the presumptions that you make on container traffic and oil and gas activity. But the overall result of this is, you know, from a Coast Guard perspective, an increased demand for Coast Guard services.

We have a challenge in just establishing sovereignty and having a presence, a consistent presence, in waters that are the subject of a lot of international interest.

So let me talk a little bit about the opportunities that we have today and moving forward. And I believe that the Coast Guard, in great measure, has seized a lot of the opportunities to cooperatively address some of the challenges that I described before.



So as an example, we've done a number of search and rescue—combined search-and-rescue exercises with both North Pacific and Arctic partners. One of the great ones was co-hosted by ALCOM, NORTHCOM and the Coast Guard two years ago, Arctic Chinook. We followed that up recently with another exercise in Iceland, involving all the Arctic nations. And so we actually cooperate on a daily basis to conduct our search-and-rescue operations.

Fisheries. As a result of warming waters, we do see evidence that the fisheries activity is moving northward. As I mentioned before, there is, particularly in the Russian side of the maritime boundary line between the U.S. and Russia, a lot of illegal fishing activity going on. And we've cooperated quite closely with the Russian border guard to address some of that activity, because, as you know, those are essentially pooled resources in the Bering Sea and in the Arctic Ocean.



Having ice-breaking capability is important to our nation.

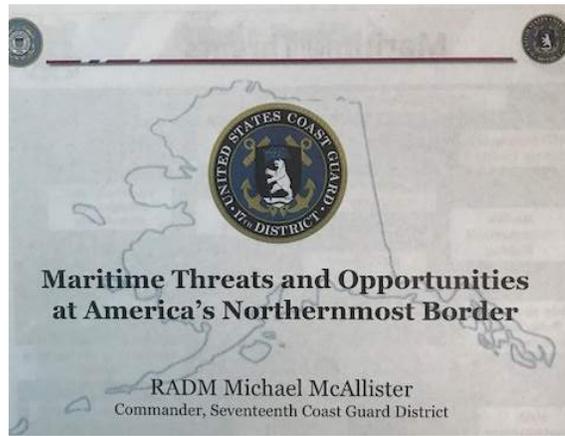
Rear Admiral Michael McAllister
Commander, 17th Coast Guard District

And so just to give you a sense of how frequently we do that, in the last 16 months, we have done eight combined operations with our Russian counterparts, leading to five seizures or violations, totaling 10,000 tons of illegally caught fish. And so, again, because those resources are important to both countries, we engage in a high level of cooperation.

Same is true on oil-spill response. After a long hiatus, we have re-initiated conversations and planning with the Russian Federation. We have an existing joint contingency plan for oil spills with them. We've come back to the table. We've met twice now to redo that plan, and we have got a commitment for a joint oil-spill/on-the-water exercise. We'll do a seminar this year and an on-water exercise next year in 2019. So, again, these are areas where we have common interests, particularly with Russia, and that will continue to work. We have great relationships with Canada as well. We have an existing oil-spill joint contingency plan with Canada that we exercise every year, and that's a very mature process.

And then speaking a little more broadly about North Pacific partners, you know, we often look at the Chinese activity in the North Pacific and the Arctic with some degree of suspicion, but we cooperate with China as well.

When we do our high-seas patrols in the North Pacific, we take Chinese ship riders on board our vessels. And a lot of the vessels that we see out there fishing have Chinese connections, whether it's Chinese owners or they're Chinese-flagged vessels, and they can take greater boarding and, if necessary, seizure enforcement than we can alone. And so those are the types of partnerships that, again, get after some of the resources that are important to all North Pacific nations.



A lot of opportunities out there for enhanced governance. There's an Arctic Coast Guard forum stood up, which has been very helpful, in terms of information sharing and sharing your best practices and annual exercises.

I'm pleased to note just recently the port access route study, which many of you are familiar with because you have provided the Coast Guard input on those studies, which establishes a ship-routing scheme, a safe shipping corridor through the Bering Sea and Bering Strait, was actually jointly proposed to the International Maritime Organization by the U.S. and Russia. We approached the Russians, and they said, heck, yeah, we want to join you on this. And so that was voted out positively out of the subcommittee at the IMO.

We've identified deep water for those ships to operate in. They're away from subsistence hunting and fishing areas. And they're far enough off of land that if a ship casualty existed, then we would have time to respond before that ship was in danger of going aground.

One of the core elements of our Coast Guard strategy is to engage with local communities throughout Alaska. And, you know, that helps us take advantage of traditional knowledge and allows us to work to develop the capabilities, capacities of local communities to be first responders. And this comes in the form of things like oil-spill training, safe boat—boater safety training, “kids don't float” program, in which we interact with about 4,000 kids every year; ice rescue training, cold-water training, mass-rescue training, taking the lessons learned from Arctic Chinook, our last big mass rescue exercise, and bringing it to other communities to help them with their plans and so forth.

And then lastly, the opportunity for capability investments. Having ice-breaking capability is important to our nation. And I know the Coast Guard's very excited about the fact that in this year's federal budget, we have got some money to build the first heavy icebreaker that we built here in the U.S. in 40 years. I suspect that Senator Sullivan has been a great advocate and Senator Murkowski, who also has been a great advocate, is excited about that as well.

But there's a lot of other infrastructure needs that, you know, still exist and will exist into the future, things like making sure that we have bathymetry and hydrography to ensure safe shipping around the Arctic; the port services, the maritime domain awareness that I talked about earlier. And so there's some continuing challenges ahead.

So let me conclude just by saying there are numerous threats or potential threats out there, but I think that we're on a good trajectory, in terms of cooperating on a federal, state and local level amongst federal organizations and on an international level to address some of those threats. But cooperation isn't enough. Presence, having the ability to be there, is important as well, and so we're making some good inroads there. And, you know, I feel like we're at an inflection point, where, you know, we have a choice—we need to make some needed investments to get ahead of the traffic so that we're not a victim of it or we're not responsive or reactionary to it.

But one thing I'll offer to you as certain is that your U.S. Coast Guard, Alaska's U.S. Coast Guard, will continue our leadership role to ensure the safety, security and proper stewardship of Alaskan waters, including the U.S. Arctic.

Admiral Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D.

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

Under this administration, NOAA has identified two top priorities. The first we call weather and water, and it's minimizing the impacts of extreme weather and water events through implementation of a bill called the Weather Act that was signed by the president last year. And this is a bill that really details a lot of great work with our observing systems, our models, our people and forecasters to help save lives and protect property. And we're already underway with this. And for Alaskans, it really matters, because the weather is some of the nastiest there is in the country. And water in the form of ice, and all its movement and its decline, is something also very important to track and forecast. So that's our one top priority.

Our other priority we call the blue economy priority, has to do with increasing the sustainable economic contributions of all of our ocean and fishery resources. Alaska is blessed with the best-managed sustainable fishery in the world, and we are going to do things at NOAA to continue that, promote that fishery and keep that world-leading status as one item.

Now, our presence in Alaska is quite rich. We have over 26 sites occupied by all six of our—we call line offices. So we have our fisheries folks present in Alaska, several labs that do some really terrific science that help inform our fishery management rules and regulations, and a really great partnership with fishermen in Alaska. In fact, the head of our NOAA fisheries is Chris Oliver, who led the NOAA fisheries in Alaska for several years.

We also have weather forecast offices and weather service offices, a total of 13, doing great work, because I talked to Senator Murkowski and Sullivan both, and they have both expressed their keen interest in keeping our forecasters and great people there because of the lifesaving work they do. And then we have other assets in Alaska, National Ocean Service does, as well as our office of marine and aviation operations and others. So a really great presence, and we enjoy all that we do to help the people of Alaska.

Now, national security contributions of what NOAA does are quite rich. [w]hat we did during [ice] exercises is these two submarines would go and basically practice operating in the Arctic. And it was really important to do, because of the fact that the ice conditions



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Department of Commerce

are changing so dramatically. You know, you would think, okay, less ice, easier to operate. Not so. The ice is moving so much more now, that our submarine scrapers are really having a hard time navigating. When the ice kind of starts moving together, it creates these things called keels, like underwater mountains. And so they're trying to navigate between these ice ridges and keels, and then the very shallow bathymetry. And so it can be pretty hazardous.

So the work we do to support that is through our National Ice Center in Suitland, Maryland. And so for anybody visiting this week, I encourage you to go take a visit there and see all the great work they do, not only for Alaska but all of our forces operating in the Arctic.

And also what's interesting, too, is that some of the changes that are occurring—not talked about much—are in the ocean. What we saw during the last ice exercises, there's new oceanographic features that can be exploited by sonar. It used to be that sonar ranges in the Arctic weren't very long. And so our subs could operate relatively safely and undetected by adversaries. Now, with these new features, there is extended sonar ranges, and that means more chances for adversaries to find us. Not good. And so we're learning how to operate in those conditions, is what our submarine forces are doing. And NOAA provides much support, in terms of weather and ocean forecasting, as well as ice.

Energy development is something that this administration has expressly supported through an Executive Order No. 13795. And in that—and you have a picture here of Prudhoe Bay, which is the largest oilfield in North America. And so NOAA's role, with respect to energy development, is in the permitting through Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act consultation and permits. And so what we've done, which I think is relatively novel and certainly I think good for America, is that I have gotten [together] with the Department of Interior and we have agreed on joint regulations on how we interpret ESA and MMPA, and so that there's no daylight between us.

The significance of that is this: Prior to us coming into office we had conflicting views of our interpretations of those two acts. So anybody trying to get a permit would go to Interior, and they'd get a ruling, and then they'd come to us, and they'd get a ruling. And then they wouldn't match, and then you'd have to just cycle back and forth and back and forth. It was really difficult.

So now permitting for energy development is going to be much more efficient. And we're going to see—for those wanting to do that in a sustainable fashion up in Alaska, the process will go much more smoothly.

NOAA in Alaska: Supporting Investment in National Security, Energy, Transportation, and Communities

*Alaska Federation of Natives Conference
Roundtable Discussion on Challenges at
America's Northernmost Border
April 16, 2018*



RDML Tim Gallaudet, PhD, USN Ret.

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and
Acting Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere



Department of Commerce // National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration // 1

Transportation and our support to that involves our nautical charting. And the waters of Alaska are poorly charted right now. So we developed an Arctic charting plan, and we are going to deliberately go through and start improving the charts in the region so that we can promote safer navigation and increasing maritime transportation and activities in the maritime areas.

Interesting thing about the Crystal Serenity and cruise ship activity in the Arctic, Alaska this last year just became the number one site for domestic cruise destinations in the country. That's a pretty significant accomplishment there and a sign of things to come. But none of that's going to happen well or safely unless our charts are updated. So we have a very good plan to do that.

And then, lastly, communities. We are doing much work to support communities in Alaska, ranging from weather forecasting, as I mentioned, to working with an outfit represented I think on the upper right there by the erosion that's being experienced called—being experienced called Adapt Alaska. And that's a great organization working to provide information to communities on how to manage and plan and deal with the environmental change that's occurring. And so we're providing much information to help that great outfit do what it does for the public and Alaskans.

We of course, under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, issue incidental-take authorizations for Native Alaskans for subsistence hunting. And we will continue to do that with close coordination with the Native Alaskans as a service we enjoy and are proud to do.

And then, lastly, fishing. I mentioned how the fishing industry in Alaska is the greatest in the country. And we'll continue to sustainably manage that great fishery and look for ways to even become better and optimize yields. It's actually part of a larger initiative that Secretary Ross is promoting, and that's to increase all of our fisheries activity around the country. We're calling it the National Seafood Production and Competitiveness Initiative. And what that involves is not only advancing our fisheries, our maximum yields for our

fisheries, to improve stock assessments, using better technology like unmanned systems, but also increasing market access of our fisheries overseas.

Secretary Ross on a regular basis meets with his counterparts, talking about trade. And we are making sure that seafood exports are part of those discussions, and that reduction of tariffs in key markets like Korea and Japan will happen to promote U.S. fishermen.

We also have other opportunities—what we call a Saildrone. We started out using [these unmanned surface vehicles] in Alaska. We're going to be using them more in the Pacific to take ocean observations, weather observations, and even now starting to do fishery stock assessments, all automated. We lease the service, actually. We don't even own them. And it's a lot cheaper than doing it, I guess, the old-fashioned way with people, which can be very expensive. So that's just one example of innovation to do our mission better.

There is [also] a green sponge that was collected by our deep-ocean research vessel and it has been found, through a partnership with North Carolina University, to have anti-cancer properties.

So we're going to be increasing the amount of what we call bioprospecting all around the deep sea, in Alaskan waters and elsewhere, in an effort, as genomics and the advanced computing technologies are going to allow us to just do amazing things in those fields, to better American lives, in the health and pharmaceutical industry.

Greg Razo

Vice-President, Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

In Alaska, about 90 percent of all the freight and fuel that comes to our state comes through marine transportation, and half of that comes through the Port of Anchorage. In order to do business, you need materials, you need fuel, you need to get the stuff that you're going to use to build with on the ground in Alaska.

The Port of Alaska really has some fundamental deficiencies that have just come as a result of age and not keeping up with infrastructure needs, and it's something that's true I think of a lot of infrastructure across the United States. There's about 1,400 port pier supports that have lost three-quarters of their thickness, the steel pipes that hold all of the infrastructure on top of the Port—it needs to be modernized and needs to take advantage of modern materials, modern engineering.

And it seems to me that because of the strategic importance of the Port of Alaska, because of all of the business reasons why it's important to have your materials there on time and a place that has access to rail transportation, road transportation, other marine transportation, that it really is one of our region's priorities to make sure that the Port stays open, that it grows, it becomes modernized, and that we can continue to use it for another 50 years.

Alaska's facing the same epidemic that the entire nation is facing, and that's opioid and methamphetamine addiction. We have got an opioid crisis in Alaska, just as many other places across the United States have it. And in Alaska, it's particularly invasive, this infection of opioids into our state. And that's because many of the small communities in



It's really important that we take advantage of the leadership we have with AFN and attend these sorts of events, tell our stories, make people understand that Alaska is really a different place, and it's a place that very few people understand.

Greg Razo
Vice-President, Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

rural Alaska have relatively small populations, and it doesn't take a lot of heroin or other drugs coming into the village illegally to really make a difference and really affect the lives of people and to create unsafe situations. And for all of us, I think at least in the Alaska Native community, we understand the dangers of addiction and what addiction has done to our people. And now we have a poison that is much more serious and much stronger and much more dangerous than anything that we've encountered previously.

And so we're committed... to take advantage of all the opportunities that Congress is opening up so that we can start focusing on prevention, that we can focus on treatment, and we can start educating our children about these dangers so that they understand the importance of not succumbing to addiction.

It's really important that we take advantage of the leadership we have with AFN and attend these sorts of events, tell our stories, make people understand that Alaska is really a different place, because it's a place that very few people understand.

So all of that working together, that partnership, is part of our cultural beliefs, it's part of the unity of Alaska Native people. I'm proud to be an Alaska Native person here today to talk to all of you.

Richard Glenn
Executive Vice-President of Lands and Natural Resources,
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

Ships of course need to be strengthened for Arctic service. This is true for everything, from clothing to the Internet. The fact that we're on the edge means a lot of things come our way and fail; but, it also means that what has been proven to work in our region can work almost anywhere in the world. It's durable.

I had the opportunity to help some folks from the Department of Energy look at putting instruments in the North Slope of Alaska that look up at the sky. It's basically just glass-domed instruments that's supposed to look at cloud cover, thermal profiles, and wind profiles. All we had to do was figure out how these scientifically modern instruments can survive in an Arctic environment. We thought about the analogies: just put a parka on it. If you put a parka on it, it will work. And it was—it became the mantra for the station. And now they have success in looking at the changes in the atmosphere that are accompanying this change in temperature, change in climate that we're all talking about.

We live on the edge. We live on the edge technology-wise, defense-wise. Our communities are there, but one of the themes I hope to convince you is the people are a constant. They'll be there before this or that new wave of technological change occurs, and they'll be there afterwards. And it persists. They transcend these waves of technology and waves of change that keep going through our area.

If we talk about Alaska-specific issues for the people that live there—and most of the Alaskans, this will be a familiar message—[the question] is what are the risks to Alaskans? And we know that our state depends heavily upon subsistence, food resources from the land and the ocean, but at the very same time we depend on resource development for the economy, for our communities. They appear to be in conflict, but those of us who live there know they are a necessary tension, because we need both of them.

And so legislation that threatens the subsistence way of life or threatens resource development, responsible resource development, our region remains a risk, and we play defense all the time to try to prevent bad legislation from threatening the development of our communities.



Ships of course need to be strengthened for Arctic service. This is true for everything, from clothing to the internet. And the fact that we're on the edge means a lot of things comes our way and fails, but it also means what has been proven to work in our region can work almost anywhere in the world. It's durable.

Richard Glenn

Executive Vice-President of Lands and Natural Resources,
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

The threats include the national security issues like we just talked about. But in this changing Arctic era, they also include our economies being bypassed by larger national economies. And if you forget about the people that live along your transit, you run the risk of an alienation of people, an alienation of economies. And those of us who live in those small communities, we run the risk of becoming isolated in our own lands.





We occupy a front-row seat to the economic opportunity, to the changing world, but also in the responsibility to our people, our shareholders and our community residents, to husband this change and this interaction for the benefit of the folks who live there.

Richard Glenn

Executive Vice-President of Lands and Natural Resources,
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

The changing world changes our coastline. We are very thankful that NOAA has, for example, initiated charting. Our grandparents' generations were the folks that assisted the coast in geodetic survey with the brass-weighted lines that put the fathom marks along the marine charts that we use today. Thank God there are some parts of our shallow Arctic environment that don't change as much with time, but the barrier islands, they're walking around. And thank you for keeping up with modern charting.

The coastal erosion, it's just one visible and ongoing aspect of the change that exists in our world. When global climate change became a theme of researchers and journalists, we, in the north part of Alaska, would receive waves of interviewers coming forward to get the story about change, global climate change. They want to understand it better. And they come like—so I don't know. If you think of yourself fixed while these sweeping migrations go by, we have marine mammal migrations, sweeping changes in the ice cover, changes in waterfowl—oh, the snowbirds are here, right? Well, the geese have come in. Well, now the climate journalists are here. They come right after the snowbirds, but right before the walrus. And the questions begin. They're familiar. But my answer started to get kind of rote, which is if you want to understand change, get in line, because things have been changing here for centuries.

In addition to the barrier islands and the climate change, there's a sweeping cultural change. And so it's just another one of these issues that we have to be resilient about, we have to adapt to. And that's one of the opportunities that is left for us, which is to use technology to adapt, to use technology to adjust, to move. The changes in technology are coming so fast, they make me feel old. The technological changes bring a new pipeline to our area, the pipeline of information. And with that technological change, we change into a new era of communication, where distance doesn't seem to matter so much anymore. And we might be able to take advantage of the cold environment, like our ancestors have always done, using the environment to their advantage.

This means new markets, everything from server farms in permafrost, but it also means changes in telemedicine, changes in Arctic research, changes in education for our children. These represent—like the oilfields did for my generation or the DEW Line stations did for my grandfather's generation, these are new jobs, new economies. So those are opportunities I think that exist for us as we go forward.

The Northwest Passage has been blown open. Ships are going by, trade is going by, and we hope that we can benefit from the positive impacts of such change, rather than from simply suffering from the negative impacts.

The era of defense first involved watching for people to come over the horizon from another foreign country, then watching for aircraft. And now we're watching for missiles with radar systems and eyes that never blink, looking at space. But they're stationed in a place where two worlds of people are getting to know each other. They have a lot that they have learned from each other, but there's still a lot more that they can learn.

And if my DEW Line father and my Inupiat mother have taught me anything, it's taught me that there's these two ways of looking at the world, but they overlap in the middle. And if you can find that place where the overlap exists, it's nothing but paydirt, as far as good lessons to learn. It helped me to learn about my natural environment, it helped me to learn about sea ice, helped me to learn about permafrost and geology and staying alive in a blizzard. And I think we're not done learning yet. There's still plenty of opportunity.

We occupy a front-row seat to the economic opportunity, to the changing world, but also in the responsibility to our people, our shareholders and our community residents, to husband this change and this interaction for the benefit of the folks who live there.



We live on the edge. We live on the edge technology-wise, defense-wise. Our communities are there, but one of the themes I hope to convince you is the people are a constant.

Richard Glenn

Executive Vice-President of Lands and Natural Resources,
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

Roundtable Discussion

Challenges at America's Northernmost Border: Congressional Perspectives

Honorable Lisa Murkowski

U.S. Senator

I feel like more and more on a daily basis I'm an educator, trying to educate others about the challenges that we face.

And so when we work to defend programs like bypass mail or the imperative of the Denali Commission or why, when it comes to USAC funding for our telehealth, for our tele-education, it's so imperative for us.

It's not just about getting more dollars than the next state. It is working to educate and really inform as to the need, because if we can't convince others of the need of the uniqueness of the very specific challenges, we're just one more delegation out there arm wrestling for more federal revenues.

There's been a lot of discussion about climate change and the impact that we are seeing as a state. I think that this is an opportunity for us as Alaskans to lead in a space of awareness, because we are seeing.

And if you don't want to use the word "climate change," you don't have to use the word "climate change." But you have to acknowledge that whether it's what Admiral Gallaudet is dealing with, from the perspective of the oceans and what we're seeing and changes in ocean acidification and changes in fisheries, or what the military is dealing with as they're looking to reinforce military infrastructure that is now under threat, not necessarily from a foreign invasion but from an environmental invasion, these are considerations that I think we can bring to the fore. We can have this discussion without getting into the politics of who started it. It is a reality for us. And so in that reality, how we, again, build the awareness so that we can work to address our realities.





... if we can't convince others of the need of the uniqueness of the very specific challenges, we're just one more delegation out there arm wrestling for more federal revenues.

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator

I do hope that through this partnering that we have built, that we can continue to build on, that we can do more to portray not only the challenges, but how Alaska is structured differently.

We still have much to do to educate those who don't understand Alaska's unique history with regards to our Native Claims Settlement Act and the fact that—very specific example—so many of our veterans who were eligible for a Native allotment were serving in Vietnam at the time of the war and so weren't able to apply for an allotment. Now, decades later, they're seeking a level of equity. But we're getting push-back, not because they shouldn't have some entitlement, but because there are those who do not want to see a single acre of federal land transferred into private hands, regardless of who would be entitled to that.

So making sure that there's an understanding as to why and how this equity must be addressed. And the folks from Sealaska that fought for years to get their entitlements complete, that was a decades-plus battle. So, again, helping to educate us on the issues that are so significant, so important.

Honorable Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator

We take a lot of pride in our military in the state, and I always like to brag about the number of vets we have in Alaska, the incredible heritage of Alaska Native veterans serving at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic group in the country.

We have national security challenges all over the world. You just pick up the paper, and you see them. But from 2010 to 2016, we cut defense spending by 25 percent. And that wasn't good for the country, it wasn't good for our men and women in the military, and it certainly wasn't good for Alaska. And we're reversing that. We constitute what I like to call three pillars of America's military might. We're the cornerstone of missile defense. We're the hub of air combat power for the Arctic and Asia-Pacific, including with 100 fifth-generation fighters going to be stationed in Alaska. No place on the planet Earth will have that kind of power. And then we're a platform for expeditionary forces that can get to hotspots in the world on a moment's notice.

And we're building on all those. In the last three years, the three of us secured over a billion dollars in military construction in Alaska. Good for the country, certainly good for the nation's defense, but good for our economy as well.

And for Alaska, there's an entire recapitalization program of the Coast Guard's assets, ships, helicopters and other things, that's happening. And not a lot of people are talking about it, but it's very important, great for the country, great for our state.

Second, this is, to me, the biggest issue that we all should be focusing on. We're finally starting to making progress on our economy. You know, Alaska is still stuck in a recession. We still have the highest unemployment rate in the country. You know, you talk about social programs and what Congress needs to do. The best social program in the country by far is a good job that gives people pride and gives people a sense of purpose. And we're certainly, I think, trying to make progress on that.

We've had a federal government now that I think is really wanting to help us on our economy, not shut us down on energy. But there were some of the big issues like ANWR. Some of the ones like this tax settlement trust, which I think are going to be great for our Native corporations... principal drivers of our economy in the state for everybody, not just Alaska Natives.

On the 8(a) program, I've gotten a number of commitments from all the service secretaries on how they're looking to work the 811 program, so it's not the Secretary of the Army, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Air Force. It has to be the exclusive, you know, sign-off on those kind of contracts. We're making great progress on that.

Just last week the administration put out an executive order that said—on big permitting infrastructure projects—one lead agency, period. One. And it will be done within two years at max. That is going to help our state tremendously. It's going to help the economy.



Third... we are starting to get a lot of federal lands to Alaska organizations, to Regional corporations, to TCC, to... the Alaska Native equity Veterans Allotment Act for our veterans who served their country and still don't have the ability to apply for allotments—and we have the Secretary of Interior who is 110 percent behind that, which I think bodes well for that bill. It's going to be important.

Fourth... we have this opportunity for a place that can be the hub of science and research for our young people.



... we have this opportunity for a place that can be the hub of science and research for our young people.

Honorable Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator

And by the way, that would include, certainly, traditional knowledge, but working with NOAA. And we're very excited about this, getting more NOAA assets.

And fifth and, finally... [we are] getting Alaskans, great Alaskans in senior positions in the federal government who can help people understand our issues, can watch out for our issues, but also implement national policy.

So who are those—who are those examples? Chris Oliver... an Alaskan top guy in terms of federal fisheries. Drue Pearce, the former state Senate president, is in a senior position of the Department of Transportation. Chris Hladick is the head of the EPA for Region 10. He was the former commissioner under Governor Walker. And now that we have the wonderful Secretary of Interior, I will save the best two for last. Joe Balash is the Assistant Secretary of Interior in charge of oil and gas offshore/onshore, mining, the number one guy in the country for that.

And we are now all very, very proud, and everybody knows her, and she's a wonderful Alaskan, a wonderful American—Tara Sweeney, nominated by the president to be the Assistant Secretary of Interior for Indian Affairs... But here's a stat that I like to talk about: The Interior Department has six assistant secretaries. Hopefully within the next couple weeks—two, one-third, will be Alaskans. And that's great for our state and great for the education component.

Honorable Don Young
U.S. Representative

I think the biggest challenge we have is within the organizations alone, AFN, and the villages, and those outside groups that will try to influence you, I think, in a negative way.

AFN has done an outstanding job, and I believe the original intent of the act, the Alaska Native Land Claims Act, has been a success. They'll be those that will say, well, we could have done better, or we don't like what's happening, or someone else is getting rich off this act. And you'll have that dissension. Don't have that, because with your unity, if you work together and educate, yes, your members in villages primarily, that are being told some dishonesty, that you can achieve what I think the largest group in America of influential input into the way things are done in the state of Alaska and the United States. I am one that believes that very strongly.

I get criticized sometimes because they say I'm not listening. I'm looking at the future. And we can never stay behind. We have to accept and adapt. It goes back to the mention of climate change. Lisa and I may not totally agree with this. I do think it's occurring, but

I also don't think we've solved it, nor do we have a solution to it. Just read the geology of this globe. You'll understand what I'm saying. We have erosion, maybe higher water and things. Let's adapt to it. Just to say no will not accomplish anything.

I'm quite excited about most of the legislation the senators have mentioned, because it's been out of the House now numerous times, including the allotment program. And we do have some push-back, which I'm going to ask the Honorable Zinke on, from one of our BLM groups, that they want to be able, in the bill which I've introduced and passed, to select the lands for the veteran allottees. That's not going to happen. The original allotment act was because of proximity, or what I call past use of lands, and they have the rights to select what they select, not someone else and a government agency, you're going to get this piece of land, and it's your allotment while you were serving in Vietnam.





Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

I'm pretty bullish on Alaska. Alaska has a lot of the same feeling as Montana [where I] grew up. And out front, my wife, her experience is she worked at the Lucky Wishbone. Her father was a Native Alaskan, and so our family has deep ties.

Up front, on policy of Native Alaskans, I'm a believer in sovereignty. You've heard me say that a number of times, and I mean it, is that we should work as partners. But my job is to represent 573 tribes, and BIA is the only people department. The other departments in the Interior, so you know, it stretches 12 times zones. It's from the Virgin Islands all the way out to Palau. And there's a lot of issues in some of the territories, a fifth the territory, and the number of bureaus—an important bureau is BIA.

And it has been frustrating trying to get Tara in. And I think she's terrific. And by the way, it's the first, you know, female Native Alaskan ever to be nominated. And I think she'll get through as Assistant Secretary. But, you know, Interior has a lot of firsts. We have the first female Bureau of Reclamation, in Brenda, as well as—you know, you want to talk about frustration. We just got our director of the USGS. He's an astronaut. He has a Ph.D. in earth sciences. He's had a top secret SCI—SCCI security clearance. And I will say probably he is the most distinguished and the most—as far as his credentials go, in the history of the USGS as director. And that's saying something, because you have John Wesley Powell and some terrific directors in the past. But over a year to get an astronaut through?

And as Interior stands today, I think we're at seven out of 17 Senate-confirmed positions. I had Senator Udall over at the office with your senator, and we were talking. And he's talking about when his father was Secretary of Interior. He had everyone in in two weeks. Two weeks.

It is likely going to be the case that Interior will not have BLM, the Park Service or the—some of other ones for probably two years, two years in. It is unbelievable that this would occur. It's frustrating from an Interior point of view. What's not frustrating, I think, is Alaska's future. The resources, we are pushing more authority to the State for a reason, as the one size doesn't fit all. And you recognize that.

No one knew in Washington, D.C. where King Cove was. But you know. And that came down to a choice between people and doing the right thing and being held hostage in D.C. by people that have no idea what the Aleutian Chain looks like, where King Cove is or the issues a people face just trying to get to the hospital.



But my commitment to you is Alaskans do have a voice.

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

And it did put our Coast Guard folks at risk, because the weather is kind of tough out there. And if you need to get someone to the hospital, you need sometimes a fixed-wing. You know, it is the right move, and you can't—you can't get in there with a helicopter. But it was the right decision.

And clearly the veterans allotment, that is a morally right decision. And we're working hard to get that through, and I'm pretty confident we'll get it done in this administration. But it's been a long time—a long time with no action.

And it really goes down to what we've tried to do, is trust, is I want to trust the government. I do. You know, I love my country, as you do. I want to trust the government. But when the government performs its mission, where it doesn't listen to the people, where it disregards the local voice or it disregards treaty obligations, then the trust has eroded. And we have a lot to do to regain trust.

Intentionally we've put a lot of Alaskans in senior leadership positions. We work really well with your Alaskan delegation, because Alaska, in many ways, represents why it's important that states have a voice.

Alaska's different, you know. Even when you land into Anchorage, it just feels different. Because it is. As people are pretty hard, they're independent, and to the degree, they haven't had a voice. And people feel pretty upset about it. And you know what? You should.

But my commitment to you is Alaskans do have a voice. We've selected, I think, leadership that would articulate that. And with the help of the Senate—I already got the help of the House. But with the help of the Senate, we'll get our people in. And I think the future for Alaska, as far as your ability to produce the energy that makes sense to Alaska, your ability to hunt and fish that makes sense for Alaska, and your ability to make a good living and protect those elements of Alaska that you see—that you feel dear, we'll make that happen.



Discussion

Q: Ms. Brower: *My name is Muriel Brower, Muriel Katuk Brower. I'm from Barrow, which is at the very top.*

I'm the Vice President of the Native Village of Barrow, and I had heard—some things that you could pick up on is coastal erosion. The last few years we've had storms that have ripped our coast away. And we've had the local municipal government out there with their loaders trying to build little walls of sand to keep the infrastructure from being washed away.

My question is: Is there going to be any concentrated effort into the tribal program in FEMA? Because as the tribe, we feel like we're not doing enough to help protect our beaches. And that's one thing that I was concerned about, just because it keeps happening every year, and it seems to be getting worse.

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator

Let me speak just real quickly to your ask about increased support for tribal FEMA dollars. The problem with FEMA is FEMA is the agency that comes in after the disaster. When we look at what is happening to so many of our coastal communities and many of our communities in the Interior that are on rivers that are seeing the threats due to erosion, this is a slow-moving disaster. And so our response agencies aren't set up to deal proactively. And this is a problem for us, because we're seeing it not only in Utqiagvik, it is all around our coast and, again, into the Interior.

I have met, and I know everyone else from the delegation has met with the Corps, with some of our other agencies, to discuss ways that we can be more proactive as we're seeing these threats, because we know that the cost to move a village, whether it's Kivalina or Shishmaref, that the—Newtok, the resources are extraordinary.

And ways that we can be, again, more proactive with not only the ability to slow or impede the disaster from taking place, but it's going to take some change within the agencies and legislative authorities. So that is something that we're looking at, but it is not just as easy as plussing up FEMA dollars.

Honorable Dan Sullivan
U.S. Senator

And I'll just take a quick comment on your question on research. You know, Barrow—I don't have to tell you this, and Richard touched on it again, but really has not only been the combination of traditional research, traditional knowledge, but also the Navy's presence up there, in terms of research at one point was enormous. And so what I think we need to do together, with the appropriate federal agencies represented here, is look at that again as an opportunity.

And one thing that you're starting to see—there's so much interest now in the Arctic and what's happening, and the science and—you're starting to see universities—you know, I think Stanford and Yale and the University of Arizona, for God's sake, you know, wants to be the lead, in terms of Arctic research.

Well, Arctic research should be located in the Arctic, which happens to be our state. So we all need to work together. These kind of ideas of a central clearing, you know, House, Admiral, maybe we can work on that as well. But these are the really good ideas that we need to hear from all of you, but—because it is an enormous opportunity. We've been there before, both from the Fed side, traditional knowledge side, and I think it's an opportunity that we need to redouble our efforts on.

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

Coastal erosion. You're looking across the country. Louisiana, primarily is a disappearing coast, rather than a working coast. Some of that has to do with the Army Corps of Engineers, how it was engineered. Certainly on the East Coast an enormous amount of mining of sand is being conducted to shore up coastal erosion. Alaska, you know, falls in that in particular areas. Now, the President is looking at how to reconfigure Army Corps of Engineers a little to be more proactive on their—the way they do the processes.

Right now what happens is the Army Corps of Engineers get funded, but they don't get funded to complete a project oftentimes. So we have hundreds of projects that are out there that are 20 percent completed, and they have to have new starts. So just the process to get the Army Corps of Engineers moving is pretty significant.

We think maybe on some of the things, Bureau of Reclamation—they reclaim land—is an easier route in some of these areas. But I agree with you, is you have to identify what areas we need to concentrate the effort and look at the process involved to streamline it so we can get things done.

Interior, so you know—imagine an organization that hasn't been reorganized in 150 years. Well, welcome to Interior. And you look at what—you know, what occurred 150 years ago is a lot different than the problems we face today.

And we're going—we're looking at reorganizing, taking Alaska as a "how to reorganize first," because all our—the headquarters elements are pretty much all aligned, but looking at making sure that one size doesn't fit all, because it doesn't.



... imagine an organization that hasn't been reorganized in 150 years. Well, welcome to Interior.

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

The issues in Barrow are a lot different than some of the other coastlines. And our government, which should work for the people, needs to be flexible enough to carve out of a Washington bureaucracy so we can actually put resources on the ground in a timely and meaningful way.

Q: Mr. Tilden: *Tom Tilden. I'm chief of Curyung Tribal. I wanted to say a couple of things here, first in regards to healthcare. Healthcare is funded, I believe, at 45 percent of need. And it really needs to be increased. And I know it's very difficult to get—you know, with the budget crisis that we have right now, it's hard to get money. But we really need that to be increased.*

The other thing I wanted to talk about was opiate abuse. It is happening in some of our smaller villages as well as our larger villages. And in our tribe, we started providing meals after school to kids, because we know that opiate abuse affects children's eating habits. And we started off with only 100, 100 meals a month. Now we're up to 450. And so that tells me that there are kids out there that are being neglected, abused, and are hungry. And this is something that I think that is not only happening in our community, but I think across the state. And we really need to make sure that we have enough funds to deal with this issue, both in prevention and in treatment and awareness, because I know that it's not only in our state, but it's across America. And so this is something I'm sure that you could get some of your colleagues in support of.

The other thing, in listening to some of the reports that were made this morning in regards to the piracy in the high seas affecting our fish, a lot of our communities are along the coast, and we depend on some of these resources that are being pirated.

There's other things that are affected. I think that in listening to the folks that we need some sort of international boundary commission for them to take a look at how it has affected our subsistence way of life.

When I look at the kings going up the Yukon River, for instance, I realize that we have an interboundary issue with the Canadians. When I look at Southeast Alaska and see that the mining industry is happening on the other side of the border, and the fishing is going to be affected in Southeast Alaska.

So I really believe that there needs to be some sort of beefed-up international commission to deal with some of these issues that are affecting our subsistence way of life.

But I do want to express: Thank you very much for taking the time—I know you guys are busy—for coming out here and listening to us today and listening to some of our issues. Thank you.

Honorable Lisa Murkowski

U.S. Senator

Tom, I think it's worth mentioning and reminding folks that with this last omnibus that was just signed into law, we saw funding directed towards IHS for Indian healthcare at levels that we haven't seen before. And I think that that's significant, because some of the issues that we're seeing within healthcare are at levels that we haven't seen before.

So whether it's the impact of opioids, whether it is the ongoing killer, which has—has been and unfortunately seems to continue to be alcohol. As much as we are directing resources and legislation to address the addiction through opioids, we have to make sure that there's flexibility within these programs to make sure that we don't take the foot off the gas when it comes to dealing with the negative consequences of alcohol within our families. So we are very much attentive to that as an issue.

Honorable Dan Sullivan

U.S. Senator

I think there's a lot of bipartisan support on the opioids issue. It's coming a little bit late, but it's finally here, in terms of funding. There's 64,000 Americans killed by this last year. Think about that number. More than all the men and women killed in Vietnam one year in our country. So it's ravaging the whole country.

I had a bill—you know, a bill that was passed two years ago that all of us up here voted for. Was called the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. And we introduced a bill recently that was kind of the next version of that. And one of the provisions that we got in there was more—15 percent of that new funding would go to tribal organizations or, you know, that, as you mentioned, need a lot of help and reach. And so that bill hasn't passed yet, but I think it has decent prospects.

Lieutenant Governor Mallott and I went to Canada, went to Ottawa, primarily to talk to the Canadian cabinet officials on the transboundary mining issue. We raised a number of other issues, including military cooperation.

And our message was: Look, we're a pro-resource development state. So this isn't about being against mining, but it's about transparency and it's also about you guys doing your job. I mean, there's a mine on the other side of the border just 15 miles from Juneau that's been spewing toxic waste for three decades. And our view is that's Canada's job to clean that up.

Q: Ms. Roberts-Hyslop: My name is Julie Roberts-Hyslop. I'm from 134 the Native village of Tanana, and I currently serve as the Vice President for Tanana Chiefs Conference. when I look at, you know, our theme, challenges, I also think about opportunities, because I think, you know, that's what we're—most of us are here for, is to look for how can we improve the conditions of our communities and where we live?

But, you know, I just really want to thank our Congressional Delegation for allowing the Native village of Tanana to get a land transfer from the Indian Health Service. It's going

to be an important part of our community to where we develop—that particular piece of land where an old Indian Health Service hospital was located.

And so we're looking forward to planning for that property. And one of the plans that we have is to turn it into some kind of a treatment center, because I know that in Alaska we really don't have very many facilities, you know, to help our people when they come, you know, wanting help.

But the other area that we really have challenges with is our broadband, and how we need to have that connectivity. If we're going to improve the conditions of our people in our villages, we need to have the same sort of access that people here in Washington, D.C. have, you know, versus where I live today.

I was thinking about my mother, who is 96 years old, and about four years ago she had one of those pacemakers put in, you know. And so it was really hard for her to, you know, have one of those put into her, but then it was also difficult for her to travel. And so we—based on, you know, the type of setup we have—you know, they have these carts, telecarts, to where her doctor, Dr. Schnellbacher in Anchorage, her heart doctor, was able to talk to her over the internet. They were seeing face-to-face each other. And so he was able to read, you know, her conditions, you know, with—connected up to these telecarts.

And so those are the things that we need to continue to improve upon for our villages and our village people. And so I'm just really hoping, you know, that we could work really hard to make sure that, you know, we're getting the fair dollars, you know, to improve these conditions for our village people.

And I'm just proud, you know, to have two of my members of my family being Marines, and my brother's Navy and my father Army. So, you know, it's just really an honor to be sitting here.



Mr. Mayo
AFN Co-chair

The reason I wanted to make—or encourage you on something is that Congress has appropriated funds for small tribes. It's called the Small and Needy Tribes Fund. And it's administered by the BIA. And Secretary, prior to your tenure, the BIA has been lax in distributing those funds. And the idea behind them is that the tribes, small tribes, such as about every tribe in Alaska is, has such small allocations of the BIA money so that a tribe may have \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 total.

And so what Congress decided to do was to create a line item that brings those tribes up to a minimum of \$200,000 so that they can operate. And what this does is it enables them to address their local issues to fund operations at the tribal level, the village level. It enables them to become a part of the process.

And it's so enormously important for these small tribes. And there's also a lot of them in California, and they're scattered around the country. And what we have experienced is, for whatever reason, that money has not been distributed. And we're concerned that we're coming up on the end of the fiscal year this year, this fall, and we have yet to see a distribution.

And what has happened in the past is in the last week or two before the end of the fiscal year, there's a little action, but it's not adequate. It's not fulfilling the purposes that Congress intended. And I'm hoping that I could encourage you, in your capacity, to help us see a difference in how the BIA addresses that. And from all that I hear, we could expect that, but I certainly would encourage it.

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator

Will, I want to thank you for bringing up this Small and Needy Tribes. In my brief comments, I mentioned that so much of what has to happen with our issues is education. And small but needy tribes has been one of those line items that has been challenged in multiple, multiple administrations.

And as you know, we've been successful in these last couple of appropriations to not only keep this Small and Needy Tribes account in play, but we've actually been able to plus it up. But if the monies don't get out there, because of just the administration management side of it, then we haven't accomplished what we all set out to do.

So you reminding me the importance of it from an appropriations perspective, and reminding the Secretary from the perspective of, okay, now how we administer these funds, this is how we make the difference.

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

And obviously this is the first time I was aware of it, but I have written it down. And of course it matters when the chairman says something about it.

Lieutenant General Kenneth Wilsbach
Alaskan NORAD Region & Alaska Command

And I did want to come back to—Will, some of the comments you made about the environment in the range space. And the military in Alaska that train in the JPARC know what a great deal we have there, because it's the only place in the world where you can train to the level that we do.

And so we're very cognizant of the environmental impacts that we could have on the range. We know about the noise. We know about fishermen. We know about trappers, hunters and so on and so forth.

And we appreciate that many of the people that are on the ground inside of the range space, their livelihood revolves around their ability to fish and hunt and trap.

And so we don't want to ruin our opportunity by overstaying our welcome or perhaps ruining or having impact on those that really have their livelihood in the environment that we're training in.

So I would like to tell you thank you for working with us. And also we're actually expanding the JPARC here in the fall. It's been an effort that's been ongoing for about five years, and just recently we had the period of public comment.

And the State of Alaska, the citizens of Alaska, the tribes and the Alaska Natives all had an opportunity to comment and ask questions about what was going to be incorporated in the expansion of the JPARC. And everybody came at the problem in a very collaborative way. And I just want to publicly thank all the groups that did that, because it's going to allow us to improve the quality of our training in Alaska.

Q: Ms. Bahnke: My comment is to Secretary Zinke. First of all, I want to thank you for how you started out by saying that you're a believer in sovereignty and that you represent 573 tribes.

I'm Melanie Bahnke. I'm the President of Kawerak, and I represented 20 of those 573 tribes. I'm excited to hear that as you look at—that you're looking at reorganizing Department of Interior. It was under President Nixon that the concept of self-governance was born. And I think, after decades, we've been able to prove that it is a successful model.

And I hope that as you look at rearranging your house, that you consider areas where self-governance can be expanded. I believe that we could do a much more efficient and effective job in a lot of the other programs within Department of Interior, such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Park Service.

And I also encourage you to—it's been Department of Interior and DHSS that have been the leader in compacting, but there are other—your colleagues, secretaries, where you could be encouraging them to look at this as a model for success.

When you look at where we've been given opportunities, for example, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, within a few decades we rise to the top in being the economic driving force in the state of Alaska.

With the healthcare system, we have got entities that have received prestigious awards such as the Baldrige award. And I do believe that this is one major opportunity that's right in front of us, where we're aligned as Alaska Native entities. And this administration and I'm sure our Congressional Delegation agrees with me on this issue. There are other areas where we could be compacting and expanding self-governance.

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

Well, let me walk you through what we face in Interior. Remember, imagine an entity that hasn't been reorganized in 150 years. So let's say you have a salmon and a trout in the same stream. Happens all the time. Upstream you have a dam, downstream you have irrigation, and if that stream goes past or near a Forest Service holding. So the salmon are managed by my friends over at Commerce, NNMS. The trout is managed by me at Fish and Wildlife Service. Upstream water temperature and flows is generally the Army Corps of Engineers, unless it's a dam that produces hydroelectricity. Then it's the Bureau of Reclamation, depending on basin.

Downstream irrigation is Bureau of Reclamation. A Forest Service holding. Surface is Department of Agriculture, exercised through U.S. Forest Service. Subsurface is BLM, exercised by me. And when you get to a water compact, it's a trifecta between the State, the tribe and BIA.

Same stream, whether it's replacing a bridge or dealing with repairing a bank, you would likely have multiple biological opinions independently produced by agencies that have different missions and different regions. And you wonder why we can't get a permit. You wonder why we're mismanaging my opinion being the steward of our greatest holdings, which is our public lands.

And so looking at it, we think a better model is to go to unified regions. Now, unified regions, if I had the USGS take a look at: On the basis of science, how would you realign the region boundaries?

Watersheds was a primary driver. And then wildlife corridors. I signed a Secretary order recently on wildlife corridors because wildlife corridors are a critical component of a healthy system.

So the USGS looked at, on the basis of science, about 13 variables, again, water, watersheds, wildlife corridors, fauna, ecosystems, and they looked at boundaries of just science. How would you manage our lands better?

And then I had the SESs, the senior executive services. These are not political appointees. They're careers. And they looked at it, and I could have—I didn't agree with every recommendation, but I took every recommendation, because the careers probably have forgotten more about Interior than I'll ever know. And I wanted buy-in from our senior SESs.



I'm a big public lands guy. I think Roosevelt had it right. But he had the courage about a hundred years ago to take this nation on a course of public lands. And I think [it's] time we... had the same courage to look [to] the next hundred years.

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

So where we are is we're 13 regions, loosely, I would say, based on the 13 variables, modified a little of the SESs. And then when each of those new unified regions—and by “unified” what I mean is the National Park Service is going to have the same boundaries as the Fish and Wildlife, has the same boundaries as the different bureaus within Interior. At least we're going to have unified boundaries.

And then looking at three areas that we think are critical, one is recreation, \$887 billion industry. So we think recreation we can actually do jointly as a recreation division made up of different elements in that, we think NEPA and permitting. And do those jointly.

Because decisions that are made in the example, the trout and the salmon, all stakeholders have to be present if we're going to make a timely decision that makes sense. But when you have different bureaus with different missions, and it's sequentially, we're—in some cases, we're 17 years to make a decision on whether to put a bridge in. And quite frankly, we can do a lot better.

And where BIA fits, as if that's going to be up and—and when I said in the beginning I believe in sovereignty, is that the decision of whether BIA is going to be incorporated into the reorganization is a decision that's up to the nations.

And when I said we're equal partners and have sovereignty, that's exactly what I said, is that I think it's to the advantage of the nations to get incorporated. So I think you're going to have a seat at the table on critical decisions. But that decision whether you're incorporated or not, whether you want it the same structure you've had since 1849, that's your decision.

So we're beginning consultations. I think we've done 3,000 consultations last year in Alaska alone. But as we go forward and look at the maps, the nations are going to have to determine whether it's in their best interest to be part of the unified regions. So that's where we are in the reorganization.

But certainly I think you've got to—you know, I'm a big public lands guy. I think Roosevelt had it right. But he had the courage about a hundred years ago to take this nation on a course of public lands. And I think [it's] time we... had the same courage to look [to] the next hundred years.

What do we know is going to take place? We know there's going to be more people going through our national parks, more pressure on hunting and fishing opportunities, and how do we manage our public holdings better? And now's the time.

And if you look at the other side of Interior, is that 16 percent of Interior today is retirement age. In five years, 40 percent of Interior is retirement age. Forty percent.

So you have a President that has tasked the secretaries to look at reorganization. You have a Secretary that looks at the opportunity to reorganize. And then you have a workforce that is really senior.

So we don't have to RIF anybody. But I do think overall the reorganization will push more assets where they should be in the front line. We're pretty heavy on headquarters, but we're too short in the field.

So it's an opportunity to reconfigure what we should look like in the next hundred years, so we can—we can manage our holdings and so we can give local communities in Alaska a voice.

A complaint over and over and over again is that you know what? If you don't know the difference between the Potomac and the Yukon, maybe the Potomac's not the right place to make those management decisions that affect the Yukon so much.

So by reorganizing and giving more power to the states and the front line, and more say to the people that are affected by these decisions, I think in the long term, and probably even the short term, we will see a better reorganization and a better model that instills trust, as I'm always concerned that people don't trust the government.

And we have really good people, but trust comes with transparency and the rightful feeling and the rightful and meaningful message that your voice counts. If you jump up and down, and every time your voice doesn't—isn't heard, and you see the same thing year after year after year, that nothing's going to get done, that our veterans aren't being taken care of, the heavy-handedness of the federal government, a democracy demands that we're all participants, and our voice is heard. So I look forward to our discussions.

Q: Ms. Thompson: Briefly, I also represent the Cook Inlet villages and tribes. As you know, Anchorage, Wasilla, Kenai area all take our fish. And the tribes are meeting to start the—a commission just like the Yukon Kuskokwim health commission—fish commission to address these issues and look forward to working with you and—on these issues in the future.

Special Guest Speaker

Mick Mulvaney

Director, White House Office of Management and Budget

Mr. Mulvaney

Director, White House Office of Management and Budget

There's a lot of stuff that we're doing. We can talk a little bit about the recent thing that we passed with the Omni. I talked to Dan's staff about this. I know that Dan voted against it. But if you were going to vote against it, the right reason to vote against it was the process by which we went through it. I think everybody feels the frustration that the process is broken, that the ordinary rules that we follow, the regular order is broken and that there are some tremendous process violations in this bill.

That being said, there's a lot of good stuff for Alaska, there's a lot of good stuff for the military bases, a lot of good stuff for the public lands. Again, when you come from a state where so much of your land is owned by the federal government, it presents a challenge that is unique to you, in terms of your tax base, in terms of getting infrastructure funded, in terms of the way you run your state. Again, something that is unique to you and a few other western states.

And one of our base priorities was ANWR, and your delegation did a tremendous job on that. It's one of the great unsung successes I think of the last Congress. It got wrapped up in the tax bill. The tax bill gets all the attention, and rightly so, because the tax bill was monumental. But to also have that at the same time was, I thought, a tremendous success.

I'll do the M first, the Office of Management and Budget actually does as much on management as we do on budget. We're the—sort of the consulting firm for the President. We were created about a hundred years ago when presidents were upset that cabinet secretaries didn't listen to them very much and a President could hire or fire the Secretary of Interior, but really couldn't tell him or her what to do.



So they complained enough to Congress to create the—then the bureau of the budget, now the Office of Management and Budget to sort of sit on top of the agencies to make sure they're doing what the President wants. So our priorities at OMB are whatever the President's are. And right now under management, it is the reorganization that you heard Ryan talk about.

The government is broken. You all see it. The 17 years to build a bridge, unfortunately that's not the exception. You may have seen the President on TV with a long list of approvals that is necessary. We're looking at ten years now on average to build a road.

He and I talk about money all the time. It's my job, right? He says, "Mick, we need more money for infrastructure, more money for infrastructure." I said: Mr. President, you have to look at infrastructure, in terms of a pipeline, and you put money into one end of the pipeline, and a road comes out at the back end of the pipeline. And right now that pipeline is ten years long. And you could throw as much money as you want to on the front end of the pipeline, and it's not going to build a single foot of asphalt during your two years—your two terms of your presidency. You have to shorten the pipeline in order to actually put stuff on the ground, which is what people care about.

So the reorganization that Ryan talked about is absolutely critical to our larger infrastructure initiatives. We're hopeful that we could make more progress on infrastructure this year. I think it's probably unlikely that we'll be able to do that.

But if there's anything we can do, in terms of restructuring the government and minimizing the regulatory burden, that would be a huge success for us.

Overall, on the spending, I think you saw our priorities in the Omni. When the President stood up and said, "Look, I don't like the bill, but I'm going to sign it," the reason he signed was quite simple.

We got enough money for the opioids to help make a difference. We got enough money for the military to defend the nation. But these are the priorities for the President and for the legislature.

So we're cautiously optimistic that there's some really, really good stuff in that bill. I got the list here. I could go over it. But you all know more about it than I do.

The Polar Icebreaker I think means more to you than it does to the folks in South Carolina, but that's okay. So I think we've had a real—very successful first 14 months in office getting our priorities taken care of, in large part because of the work in the House and the Senate.

So things may slow down a little bit, which is not unusual, by the way, for those of you who follow politics. Things usually slow down in the second year of a Congress because so many folks are running for reelection. That's not unusual. But we thought the first 14 months went really, really well. We look forward to building on that if we can.

Q: Ms. Bahnke: *Mr. Mulvaney, right before you walked in, I was making a recommendation to Secretary Zinke as you look at restructuring and reorganizing. I guess an analogy to me would be the difference between just moving furniture around and doing a major remodel of your house. I'm in the middle of remodeling my house. Compacting—the idea of self-governance was started as a pilot project decades ago under the Nixon Administration, and it's proven to be one of the more effective models. If you're looking to build on success, that's definitely a model to take a look at, where you're providing tribes and tribal organizations with the resources to perform what the government was doing.*

And we've succeeded. We're building roads. It doesn't take us 17 years to build roads in our region. We have tribal transportation funding. From concept, to design, to construction, it's averaging us four years. So I do believe that's a model that is successful. I don't think it's a partisan issue. I think it's something that you would find support from our Congressional Delegation, our tribes.

And like I said, this was begun under a republican administration, so expanding self-governance and compacting opportunities is something that I hope that you would support.

Mr. Mulvaney

Director, White House Office of Management and Budget

I would be happy to take a look. I'm not familiar with it. I just asked Don if he knew about it, and obviously he does. So look forward to talking to him about that.

Q: Ms. Buretta: *Sheri Buretta. I'm the Chairman of the Board for Chugach Alaska Corporation. Thank you for being here, Director Mulvaney. Your comment about Congressman Young and his stick on the floor with the 8(a) program. If he wasn't able to spend much time educating you on the benefits of the program, it has been the missing link of the settlement act. And as you know, the federal government in the Native Claims Settlement Act received a tremendous amount of assets and land in Alaska.*



And the partnership between the Alaska Native corporations through government contracting has been enormous in our ability to build capacity and infrastructure to be able to be profitable and to give back to our communities.

So I am very happy to know that that education and that awareness is with somebody at your position, because it's important for us to spread the word and have that relationship. Going forward, these people that have presented today have shown that we have to work together. We're a small community in Alaska, and our ability to be able to work with the military and to build capacity and look out for our people and community is dependent on these types of programs that build this capacity as we transition and work with our subsistence economy.

So thank you for recognizing that as an important piece of who we are.

Q: Ms. Korthuis: *Director Mulvaney, my name is Vivian Korthuis. I work as the CEO for the AVCP association. About a month ago, I had an all-staff meeting in Bethel, and we serve the YK Delta, and we have 56 tribes in 48 villages. I asked the staff in their staff meeting if they would think back 30, 40 years in our region and come up with a list of things that worked in our region that benefited the rural—the rest of rural—the rural Alaska. And in about ten minutes, staff listed 33 things. They included D-have (ph), health aides, VPSOs, all these unique programs that are the norm now for delivery of services to our villages in rural Alaska. And one of the things that I talked to them about was—these are staff people. I have 400 staff throughout the YK Delta.*

So one of the things I told them was that before subregional clinics, someone had to sit down and figure it out. Someone had to sit down and figure out that the level of care between the health aides in the clinics in the villages, the subregion clinics, the hospital in Bethel and on to referrals outside of Bethel to Anchorage, that tiered model had to be defined.

And the process, it didn't take—it took several years to do that. And those 33 examples that my staff came up with, we go through the same process in designing things that really address the challenges in our villages.

And we're going through that right now, for example, with public safety. You know, what are the services that belong in the village, what can we subregionalize, those things that can be provided out in the regional hub and then those things that we rely on from the State or those things that can come out of Anchorage.

So I wanted to stress to you: I know that a lot of the services that are provided in rural Alaska manifest not in money, but in the things that people do to help others.

So I just wanted to point out that these things have to be thought of, these things have to be tried out, these things have to be kind of honed in to where it works in our villages.

And I really appreciate the fact that you're here listening. A lot of times we don't think of the money part of things when we—we know that—for example, last week, in one of



... a lot of the services that are provided in rural Alaska manifest not in money, but in the things that people do to help others.

Vivian Korthuis
CEO, AVCP Association

our villages, the community hub burnt down. In that village of 700 people, that's where they gather. It would be like saying in Anchorage, Dena'ina Center burnt down, or here in Washington, D.C., the convention center burnt down.

In that particular village, there is no VPSO, and there is no tribal police. And in that particular village, there are three tribes that actually exist in that village.

So what I'm trying to share with you is the fact that we go through a process of working and designing and utilizing the best practices in these models that we come up with that, that my staff came up with as an example of the last 40 years of trying to figure out what works in our villages.

And many, many times it's not the money that comes first to our minds. But we do need the appropriate funding so that these models that work in our villages can last forever, in terms of providing either healthcare or the best practice in whatever industry that we're talking about.

Q: Mr. Razo: *I would like the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI, and the Drug Enforcement Administration to see if there's some way that law enforcement can bridge the gap in dealing with the Alaska Native people.*

And the reason for that is because when folks, non-Native folks especially, who work in government, go into the village and want to gather evidence and find out what happened at the crime—I'm a criminal lawyer myself—they don't have any level of trust or understanding about the people that they're dealing with.

And they have no partnerships in the communities, they have no resources that they can draw on when they're out there, and it's incredibly expensive to get out to a lot of locations in Alaska.

And so consequently, with the state economy being the way it is, in a very steep recession for a long time, the State's public safety obligation has not been met.

And so we don't have State Troopers in the villages anymore. It's hard to get out to even fly to a crime scene. In the event of something as hideous as a homicide, it can be, you know, days before anybody comes out to investigate, with someone's loved one, you know, laying wherever the event happened.



... our people want to do something about that, we know how to take care of ourselves.

Greg Razo

Vice-President, Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

And that's not unusual. It's just not unusual right now. So we're in a crisis up there for public safety, and people are mad about it. They're really, really mad about it.

So from the Department of Justice side, I would really urge you guys, in terms of working with Alaska, to realize that just because, you know, we have the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, that doesn't mean we don't have tribal people that are suffering in Alaska.

And just because we're a Public Law 280 state doesn't mean that we need federal resources to augment the type of public safety that we have.

So—and I know you're well aware of this. It's no secret. But we just cannot continue as a state being the number one leader in domestic violence, the number one leader in sexual assault; the most dangerous state in the nation, is the latest report.

So that situation is completely untenable. And to the extent that you can recommend to your other federal partners in the Department of Justice that our people want to do something about that, we know how to take care of ourselves. And, you know, if the federal government can't figure out how to spend the little money that comes up to Alaska in a meaningful way, then please consider compacting with us so that we can use that money and put it to a use that will be a good use, that will serve much more effectively than the way we're doing it right now.

And, you know, it's so frustrating to have the State responsibility for law enforcement all lie at the State level, and then the State not do its job.

So anything you can do to help out in that situation will be greatly appreciated.



Special Guest Speaker

Tracy Toulou

Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice

Mr. Toulou

Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice

And I appreciate that. We've been working more with the State than we ever have before, recognizing how unique Alaska is.

I think you talked about the opioid issues. I mean, I know the violent crime and drug issues are worse in Alaska than, frankly, anywhere else. But it is unique, in that most of the villages you say they're hard to get to for law enforcement. There's, you know, a distinct pipeline with drugs in there, too, that would seem like something that we could focus on in a way that maybe we don't in other places. So I will take back what you said. But keep—there are people thinking about these issues.

Q: Mr. Williams: *Mike Williams with the Akiak Native community, a small village in Western Alaska. We have been putting our young people—burying them lately, you know, with the issue of alcohol, and there's scores of people dying in our villages as we speak.*

And following up with Greg's statement that we're number one in all areas, and with a tribal law and order commission that went out before, confirms that.

In regards to the amount of deaths that are occurring, Native Village of Napaskiak issued a crisis resolution just recently and urged the Governor to create the emergency order to declare disaster.



And many of our communities are crying out for police protection, public safety, and a safety plan in some way to prevent these deaths from occurring.

Mike Williams
Akiak Native Community

And that's how far we are going right now, with the alcohol sales in Bethel that—without any public safety in place being put there. And the main reason why we closed them in early '70s is because the amount of deaths that we have seen. And it's—in one year, we lost quite a few people.

And Native Village of Napaskiak issued a resolution to urge the Governor to declare disaster. And also the Native Village of Marshall also is crying out. And many of our

communities are crying out for police protection, public safety, and a safety plan in some way to prevent these deaths from occurring.

So disaster after disaster is happening in our area. So I would urge you to take a look at Western Alaska, particularly how one second-class city is affecting the whole region.

So there has been efforts to get a task force to have a talking thing to address this, but, you know, we're still in that process. But I think it is something to take a look into.

At one point the federal marshals, when they did a temporary action, really helped out a lot in some of the villages. Something like half of the villages don't even have police protection anymore. So it's a lot of communities without police protection.

So the State is failing its obligation, and so is the federal government. So we need help. And we don't know—I don't know where to go, but to ask for help. That's all I can do.

Mr. Toulou

Director, Office of Tribal Justice, U.S. Department of Justice

Yeah, thank you for that. One of the things we have going for us this year is there was a—the budget was quite a bit better than it has been for the department in Indian Country, particularly around victim services. And we're on a quick timeline on figuring out how to get that money out. We'll be doing a series of phone consultations within probably the next 30 days. We'll make sure that they're noticed to everybody, and we'll reach out to AFN separately. But I'm hopeful that some of that—a good chunk of that funding can go to Alaska to help with victim services. It's limited in what we can do.

The other thing we can do is what you mentioned, which is—and we all do task forces. And I'm sure we have all done task forces to death, but Alaska is so different than the Lower 48 and the way we provide law enforcement services to Indian communities. I think it's really useful.

I would be very interested in participating and having my office participate in anything we can do to help. We're going to work through our U.S. Attorney there on the ground. They know the situation better than we do. But there may be some things we can bring to that conversation.

The other thing I would say is some of our leadership intends to go to Alaska over the spring and the summer, particularly those in the grant area, which I think is essential for them to see how things work. They may know what—how an Indian tribe functions in the Lower 48. It's completely different in Alaska. And they need to get up there and see that, and that's something we're going to help make happen.

Q: Mr. Williams: *We appreciate the Violence Against Women Act, folks with the Native Women's Coalition and the Alaska Native Coalition coming in now to help with some of that—those issues that we are dealing with at the ground.*

Afternoon Keynote Speaker

Michelle Anderson
President, Ahtna Inc.



Ms. Anderson
President, Ahtna Inc.

So I want to preface my comments today by dedicating what I'm about to say to one of our former presidents that passed away in February, shortly before his birthday. And that's Roy Ewan. Roy Ewan would normally travel with us when we come down to Washington, D.C., because we have got some unfinished business. It's not a road project that takes 17 years. It's a matter of survival

that affects every one of you that is Alaska Native in this room. And it's an unresolved issue of 47 years. So I know that he's with us today, and I think my leadership that traveled with me, and those that work with us and—just appreciate the support in the room.

So I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak about some of the risks and threats we face in our region, the Ahtna region, and the need for capacity building and infrastructure investments.

Thank you to AFN and our co-hosts for inviting this sharing of thoughts which will set us on a positive path while balancing competing interests.

Ahtna is one of the largest inholders of private property of public lands in the United States. Our lands surround North America's tallest peak, Mount Denali—I hope it stays Mount Denali—and includes 600,000 acres in America's largest national park and preserve, the Wrangell-St. Elias.

Our lands are of great importance to the Ahtna people, who have lived there—or here for a time immemorial. We depend on hunting, fishing and other resources to sustain our culture and our way of life.

Our Elders made our ANCSA land selections based on our traditional hunting and fishing patterns. Thanks to their vision and care for our lands and wise resource management, we are living proof resilience is born from sound resource management and knowing when to take action.

Alaska became the 49th state in 1959. That's less than 60 years of statehood history. There was most definitely a colonial mindset in those early 16 years. Today, Alaska's resources and strategic position are valued with regard to national security as we heard this morning.

One of the first necessities of development in the newly formed state were the building of roads and transportation infrastructure. Ahtna is unique. We are the only ANCSA region whose villages are all road accessible. That accessibility may cause one to think that we are blessed with great opportunities. At times that's proven to be true, but more often than not, that same accessibility also means increased hunting pressures and exposure to other negative impacts.



I am not being overdramatic when I say our culture is being regulated out of existence.

Michelle Anderson
President, Ahtna Inc.

We feel that hunting pressure when it comes to increased competition for our traditional food sources. Since the passage of land claims, the Ahtna people must attend Board of Game meetings, Federal Subsistence board meetings, and even file litigation to protect our ability to hunt our traditional foods. We also compete with thousands of hunters who are licensed to hunt in our game units, and many of those hunters show no respect for our private lands.

I want to define the type of hunting I'm talking about. Ahtna people, in fact, all Native cultures, none of us are sports hunters when it comes to putting food on the table. It was never our historical practice to go out and shoot the biggest moose or caribou. Food security to us is not a sport.

Unfortunately, we are forced to be sports hunters under current state regs that dictate horn size and dimensions. Traditional foods are a core part of our culture. To be denied access to our traditional foods, because state quotas are met, is an attack on our cultural identity.

I am not being overdramatic when I say our culture is being regulated out of existence. Congress and the State of Alaska promised our leaders during the land claims negotiations that our traditional hunting and fishing rights would be taken care of.

To this day, we continue to seek a long-term solution for our food security. We believe Congress intended for Alaska Natives to manage and hunt wildlife on our settlement lands. We do not believe Congress intended for us to be wards of the State with respect to our lands and for us to attend Board of Game and Board of Fish meetings in order to ensure that we have food security.

Though our Elders have said so for decades, Alaska Native traditional knowledge is now considered quantifiable. We know how to balance harvesting, and we know when to stop hunting or fishing in order for both to continue to thrive.

The Ahtna people, like every Native group in this room, continue to work cooperatively for resolutions that allow us to put our traditional foods on the table and in the freezer. The Ahtna cooperative management demonstration project, which was signed in 2016—remember it's 2018—is a secretarial order requiring Interior Department agencies to include Ahtna tribes in the local management of federal lands and resources where possible.

The agreement was signed between the Department of the Interior and the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. AIRC was formed to be a coordinating body for

subsistence resources in the Ahtna traditional use area, and membership includes the local tribes as well as Ahtna, Incorporated and Chitina Native Corporation, because we are the landowners. Through the agreements, AITRC was given authority to cooperatively manage the subsistence moose and caribou hunt on federal land for tribal members, and a local advisory committee was supposed to be formed to provide input on federal wildlife management decisions.

But since the signing, funding has been in jeopardy, and the program has not advanced on the government side as quickly as it should.

Over the years, we found a way to work respectfully with our federal and state partners. If he was here, I would remind the Secretary that he has the power and authority to fulfill a promise to Alaska Natives, and that is allowing us to provide our food security by authorizing us to manage and hunt wildlife on our lands.

Our resources and assets present both opportunity and risk that have attracted stakeholders in matters of not only energy and transportation, but also of national security. Our traditional lands are rich in resources and accessible with over 3,500 miles of roads and trails.

Ahtna owns some of the most pristine lands in the world, and we have proven that landowners and industry can coexist and that development can occur safely for the economic benefit of all Alaskans. Knowledge of our region's lands have benefited the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System operations, or TAPS as it's known. For over 40 years, the pipeline has been a part of our region with the right-of-way crossing 55 miles of Ahtna lands and four Ahtna villages.

Ahtna hosts 197 miles of TAPS within our traditional lands as it crosses the Klutina, Gulkana, Tonsina and Tazlina Rivers which flow into the salmon-rich Copper River.

TAPS has transported approximately 17 billion barrels of oil through our lands in a safe and environmentally sound manner. One of the reasons Ahtna agreed to this pipeline crossing our lands and rivers was because we were told our subsistence needs would be provided for by the State of Alaska. That has not happened yet.



To add insult to injury, Ahtna never received one cent for any of the oil that passed through our lands. We have competed and won pipeline contracts, and our shareholders have had pipeline-related jobs through the years. But the owners of the pipeline have not paid us any royalty, nor one penny for the 17 billion barrels of oil that flow over our lands. Ahtna has been one of Alyeska's most important partners. The long-term health and safe operation of TAPS is critical for the U.S. economy and for all Alaskans, but production is significantly down in the state.

The federal government owns over 60 percent of Alaska's 365 million acres. Ahtna's experience has proven—Ahtna's experience with Alyeska has proven that a major world-class pipeline can safely transport oil through our lands. TAPS needs more oil, particularly from federal lands, to keep it running for the next 40 years and beyond.

We support energy and infrastructure projects such as the AKLNG line and the proposed Road Belt electrical transmission line or intertie. Not only would these projects help support our nation's infrastructure, but they could provide much needed economical energy solutions for our regions in Alaska.



Ahtna is the largest private landowner on the proposed AKLNG pipeline route with over 33 miles of our lands in the pipeline route. We are working with the Governor and his staff as well as Alaska Gasline Development Corporation to ensure the best possible position for Ahtna and our shareholders on the export of Alaska natural gas to international markets.

The Road Belt electrical transmission line is a major project that, if built, would create a statewide grid that could provide the reliability of Interior Alaska's power supply and more efficient use of existing power plants.

Currently, the power plants rely on diesel fuel generators in the winter months, which drives up the prices for local customers. The proposed intertie would enable greater use of electricity generated by renewable resources like wind and hydro.

The additional capacity could improve reliability and provide backup power during outages that we currently lack. Imagine being without power in the dead of winter. It happens.

This past winter, many of our communities were without power sometimes for a week at a time. Thank goodness we weren't experiencing a 40-below snap when the power was out. When this power outage occurred, we actually had gone through a snap, and it fortunately had just warmed up when the power went out.

This proposed intertie would greatly lessen the severity of these outages. It would also help to meet the military's growing need for more electrical power.

Our communities face some of the highest energy costs in the nation. Alaska entered the 20th century with an overland transportation network made up primarily of trails and sled roads unsuitable for travel by vehicles. These 5,000 trails were our people's economic means early on, and over time would become the transportation trails and roads of outsiders and goods.

Our ancestors created an extensive network of hundreds of trails connecting salmon fishing camps with winter settlements, upland hunting territories and lakeside spring camps. The modern highways that now cross our homeland follow routes that were pioneered by our people.

Within 50 years, more than 3,000 miles of roads were constructed in Alaska, driven by the rich resource potential and strategic military importance of our state. The road system that runs through the Ahtna region is critical to connecting the commercial hubs of Anchorage, Fairbanks and Valdez. All western goods and foods must be trucked into our region, and when roads become impassable, the store shelves quickly become bare.

Our highways and byways are ill-equipped for major disasters and emergency situations, considering our region is located in some of the most extreme weather patterns. As an Interior hub and crossroads of the National Highway System routes, the economy of our region is affected by the condition of these highways. During the past decade, improvements have been made to improve the routes, but there remains a significant backlog of capital improvements to these critical transportation corridors. The majority of these capital improvement projects are funded using federal aid transportation funding, and we continue to see projects being delayed, which causes serious concern for our communities. Major infrastructure projects being considered for our state must factor in the need for modern, safe and even larger roads for all the types of traffic that would be using the road system.

Regional Priorities

A full transcript and presentation materials are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.

Ms. Schubert

President & CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation

There are geopolitical issues that can impact our nation and region. And as you see, China and Russia have stepped up military activities in the Arctic. President Putin’s new military strategy clearly emphasizes protection of Russian interests in the Arctic. Restoration of the Russian military infrastructure in the Arctic began in 2012. The Russian defense ministry is building or restoring facilities on the Russian continent and Russia’s Arctic islands.



Subsistence foods account for more than 80 percent of our diets. Because of this, any development that occurs in the Arctic, whether onshore or offshore, must be done in a manner that protects subsistence resources.

Gail Schubert

President & CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation

And the Russians aren’t our only concern in the Arctic. The Chinese want equal trade access to Arctic waters as well, and you heard a reference to this earlier in one of the presentations. Chinese vessels have, on several occasions, breached Russian territorial waters without permission, and in 2015 they sent Marines on an exercise at the Bering Strait. You can see from this chart that Russia has done a lot in the past several years, in terms of its military expansion. And it’s great to hear that there is cooperation and collaboration, in terms of what’s happening in the Arctic. But truthfully, I would much rather trust the U.S. Government than Russia, in terms of the protection and defense of our shores.

And because of this, we need ports, functional and logistically situated airfields, roads, a permanent military presence in the Arctic, such as the U.S. Coast Guard or the Navy, and even small boat harbors for our villages would help. Whatever development or other activities that might happen in the Arctic, it’s critical to note that subsistence still plays a huge part in our cultural identity and survival. Subsistence foods account for more than 80 percent of our diets. Because of this, any development that occurs in the Arctic, whether onshore or offshore, must be done in a manner that protects subsistence resources.



I would much rather trust the U.S. Government than Russia, in terms of the protection and defense of our shores.

Gail Schubert

President & CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation

Ms. Bahnke

President & CEO, Kawerak, Inc.

We were the first managers of our resources, and we successfully managed these resources for thousands of years. And now we have to squeeze our way in to have a say. If we're provided a seat at the table, a lot of times it's just one seat. And we're surrounded by other people from federal or state agencies who can outvote us. They outnumber us.

And we have to compete with very well funded—sometimes they're extreme animal rights activists, or sometimes they're the sports fishermen, in order for us to have a say about the very resources that we rely on for our survival, not just for food security. To me, comparing our subsistence way of life to food security is like telling a Catholic person that the bread and wine is important for the calorie intake.

It's not just about the calorie intake for us. It's about the survival of our culture. We identify with our subsistence way of life as who the we are as a people. So we need more opportunities for co-management.

Increased opportunities for self-governance compacting. I mentioned that to the OMB Director and to the Secretary.

If you're a scientist, and you're doing best practices, you're going to make sure that you have direct observation as part of those steps. We're the ones that are on the front lines every day seeing what is happening with the animal populations, the ice conditions, and we need to be included in part of this decision making and dialogue.

We're still grappling with the rapid changes and colonization. You heard earlier from Mike about the substance abuse issues that we're being faced with.



We know what works for our people. Our culture kept us safe and healthy and well for thousands of years.

Melanie Bahnke
President & CEO, Kawerak, Inc.

Being able to celebrate the richness of our culture and carry that on with our children, we're implementing language immersion programs, and we need additional support to continue that.

A lot of times when we apply for grants, they want to know: Is this best practices? What research model do you have to show that this is going to work?

And what we do know is that our culture for thousands of years kept us healthy and well. That is best practices right there. So additional resources to grapple with those issues in a way that is relevant to us not to have some CDC person dictate that you have to have some researcher from the university come and analyze your outcomes. We know what works for our people. Our culture kept us safe and healthy and well for thousands of years. The people of the Arctic in any decision that is being contemplated. We cannot afford to continue to have decisions about us made for us without us.

Roundtable on Priorities

Mr. Andersen, Moderator

President & CEO, Bristol Bay Native Association

We heard talk this morning, words said about unity of AFN and the importance of unity. We represent the unity of AFN. We're tribal consortiums, we're villages, we're Native corporations, for-profits.

Mr. Westlake

President & CEO, NANA Regional Corporation

We can't go backwards. We've got to continually look forward. And it's important for us to look at how do we balance the subsistence resources that we have that are so valuable to the people in the region, and yet also look at developing the resources that we have so that we can have jobs. And our shareholders are asking for jobs. They want jobs close to home. *A full transcript and presentation materials are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.*

Mr. Metrokin

President & CEO, Bristol Bay Native Corporation

We can help pass on the things that we have learned in the government-contracting business. And really promoting opportunities for our villages to be sustainable and have home-based businesses that can also do business domestically as well as abroad. And we look forward to announcing a new partnership with one of our village corporations here very soon. *A full transcript and presentation materials are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.*

Ms. Pohjola

Board Member, Calista Corporation

The proposed [Calista clean energy grid] consists of 55 miles of electrical interties with fiberoptic communication, infrastructure energy storage...and 600 advanced wood stoves to displace heating fuel consumption costs and units. *A full transcript and presentation materials are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.*





What we witnessed in the last two or three years, a geopolitical shift, and that center—that epicenter is Alaska.

Vivian Korthuis

President & CEO, Association of Village Council Presidents

Ms. Korthuis

President & CEO, Association of Village Council Presidents

There's a lot going on within the state, and interacting with both—at every level, tribal—the community level, tribal level, state level, regional level, and here in D.C. at the national level.

So our goal is to leverage that, leverage everything that our ancestors and those that have gone before us, take that and leverage it and use it and make sure that we share it. I believe that we're at a pivotal point in the dynamic of what's going on here with the federal government, because we're witnessing what I'm seeing as a paradigm shift.

This paradigm is recognizing—and it's a process—that the Arctic is a place of importance, and it is a place—it's a pressure point. It's taking a lot of energy for the United States and other countries away from the normal daily business of running major world powers.

What we witnessed in the last two or three years, a geopolitical shift, and that center—that epicenter is Alaska. We saw some of the maps that were shared with us over the past couple hours here, and it only took nine hours of flight time.

We don't see it. We don't see this gigantic, huge shift that's happening, because it's not happening right in front of us. It's happening all around us.

Last week I was watching C-SPAN, and the Secretary of Defense was talking to the Senate regarding the defense budget. And in that defense budget, there were millions of dollars tied to the presence of the Southern border.

So I was thinking, preparing for this conference today: I wonder how much money is tied up in the Northern border. I'd really like to know that number, because I know we can double it and triple it just by asking for these legacy initiatives that I know that we can come up with.

Ms. Roberts-Hyslop

Vice-President, Tanana Chiefs Conference

You know, today we had the opportunity to really come together to really bring forth some of the issues, you know, that we're facing as Alaska Native people, and there's a lot of commonality here that you all heard today. And one of the challenges, you know, that we have is the large area that we have to cover. And where I live, you know, I'm like a lot of the communities where broadband is pretty slow, and, you know, right now—in fact, I was just reading the newspaper the other day about how they were starting to address trying to get some of the new technology to the remote areas of America.



If our ability to use IT and healthcare is limited, it could undo the advancements we have achieved.

Julie Roberts-Hyslop
Vice-President, Tanana Chiefs Conference

For 2018, we expect the Alaska tribal healthcare system obligation to be over 35 million from the 2015 obligation. The IHS funding is shortfalled at 30 billion a year across the nation. That means that all of our programs are drastically stressed.

We can't afford a sudden new obligation of 35 million a year. Telehealth is fundamental to delivering healthcare, and so the government, you know, requires us, as tribes, to meet meaningful new standards for our electronic health records or else be subjected to fines, and yet doesn't provide the adequate funding for the telecom infrastructure and services.

And as I have demonstrated through my mother's story, information technology is fundamental, foundational to the delivery of healthcare in remote Alaska.

So we ask FCC to reconsider its \$400,000 cap. We ask Congress to mandate full funding for the rural health programs, telecom program through a statutory fix.

So as you know, our tribal members suffer some of the worst healthcare disparities than any other Americans. And since the implementation of self-determination, Alaska tribes have reduced cost while reversing the healthcare disparities.

If our ability to use IT and healthcare is limited, it could undo the advancements we have achieved. Providing healthcare is a federal trust responsibility owed to the tribes, and the federal trust responsibility expands across all federal agencies, including FCC.

So on behalf of the 229 federally recognized tribes in Alaska, we ask that you fulfill the sacred contract by addressing this issue.

Ms. Buretta
Chair, Board of Directors, Chugach Alaska Corporation

On the AFN, there's such a diverse position from all of our communities and our organizations, but we work together and it's so important.

Roundtable on Policy Initiatives

Mr. Kennedy

Senior Advisor for the Arctic Region, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

So our vision. Basically, first bullet here deals with the fact that there's a tremendous number of issues because of the changes going on in Alaska, and what NOAA's trying to do is provide some of the—what we're calling environmental intelligence to help solve and provide information and data for some of the issues that are arising.

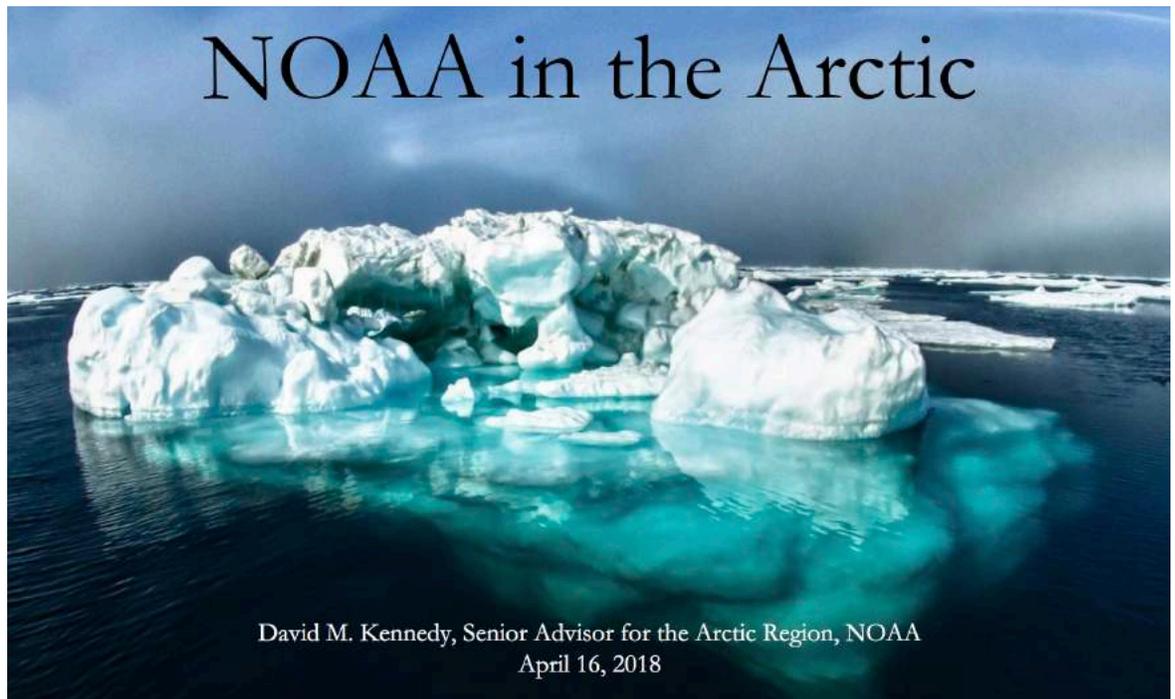
And so we—NOAA—are involved in a variety of different issues from fish, to weather, to research, to you name it. I'm going to go over that in a little bit more detail.

The second bullet here, global implication of the Arctic. Alaska—our Arctic is only part of a huge Arctic. And without kind of sharing and working very closely with all of our partners, both scientists, government and indigenous populations, we really wouldn't be getting the clear full picture of what's going on in the Arctic and be able to make some of the assumptions and decisions that we make without the data coming from other places. So a very important part, as far as we're concerned, is working with the global Arctic initiative.

Interestingly enough, there's five agencies right now who are all looking at either developing an Arctic strategy or renewing. So we're not alone. Air Force, Navy, Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard and us, all are meeting together, actually, occasionally to talk about how we're collectively working on revising and updating our strategies.

You may also know—in fact, I think it's been mentioned—there is a national strategy for the Arctic region; came about during the Obama administration. They have three lines of effort. Those are on the left. So security, number one; stewardship, and then international cooperation, which I have already mentioned.





What we've done is try and take our strategic goals and map them against the lines of effort for the national strategy. So you can see—and this is kind of a good cross-section of the types of issues that NOAA's involved with. Sea ice and weather, under security, those could fall under others as well, but they do fit there. And obviously these are both pretty significant issues for what's going on in the Arctic right now. Foundational science, the ecosystem, as the ice and the changes take place, is dramatically changing. Species are moving all around. We're deeply involved in that. Stewardship is really kind of our NMSS. Fisheries issues, resilient healthy Arctic communities, a variety of things, everything from oil-spill response to charting, to you name it, again, our international and national partnerships.

So with all the things that I mentioned that we're involved with, we, NOAA, felt like we needed to take a shot at, okay, of everything we're doing, what might we highlight, what might we really kind of try and put maybe the first among equals, if you will. And so we developed this process. [W]e developed, among drivers... energy development, transportation, economic development, climate impacts.

NOAA's ARCTIC VISION

- NOAA envisions an Arctic where:
 - Conservation, management, and use are based on sound science, and support healthy, productive, and resilient communities and ecosystems;
 - The global implications of Arctic change are better understood and predicted.

NOAA's ARCTIC ACTION PLAN

- Building out from NOAA's Arctic Vision and Strategy (released 2011)
- Provides greater detail on activities from 2014-2015 (taken from AOPs)
- Currently being updated for 2018-2020

And then we had some criteria for what we did to come up with our priorities. And that's critically emerging issues, national relevance—and I won't go through all of them—consistent with NOAA's priorities and then leveraging partnerships. All of those things then led to us coming up with, as I said, maybe first among equals, and so from the exercise that we did, these are the three areas that we came up with as maybe paying special attention to.

So obviously given the importance of weather and sea ice, that came to the top. Climate impacts and biological resources, and then human health and natural habitats and then finally improved navigation services.

You heard from my boss this morning. We have a charting plan for the Arctic. The Arctic has not been charted well, and we're working very hard to come up with a plan that will allow us to get a lot more area charted than it has.

There is a Wilson Center University of Alaska and Sandia Lab study that started on Arctic infrastructure. There is a small group that met to begin to develop the discussion around that—there's going to be a workshop in June or July—but specifically about Arctic infrastructure.

There's also a National Academy of Sciences attempt to do marine—maritime infrastructure in the Arctic. So there's a couple of discussions that are really beginning to heat up about infrastructure.

Mr. Wong

Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, Small Business Administration

The initiatives that we have for HUBZones seem to be well received, so we should be seeing improvements to that program.

And then we're trying to make improvements to all four of the SBA programs, which are 8(a), HUBZone, Women-Owned, and Service-Disabled Veteran.



Just to give you a clue with that, the proposal that I have is that if the government-contracting agency has missed their target for any of the socioeconomic goals in one year, then the next year they ought to have direct sole-source authority for any of those targets that they missed. So they have—so what it does, it will empower every program that we have.

And then in general, if they can go with that one, we have one other one that I'll wait till the 6 national 8(a) that will improve the 8(a) program that I think you guys will really like.

Mr. O'Rielly

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

I want to thank you for having me. And first of all, I should kind of outline: For many of you who don't focus on the FCC, there are five members of the commission. I am one of them. One of the five is selected as chairman. I am not that person, for good or bad.

And so we're structured in having three from the majority party, the administration, and two from outside the administration party. And so we have a 3/2 breakdown, and we work through issues. Most of the work that we do is bipartisan. We are an independent agency, so we are not part of—directly of the administration. We work and tackle issues independently of that structure.

I wanted to give you just a little flavor and say that I am not from Alaska. I'm from Buffalo, which is not anywhere close. I spent nine days when I first took this job in 2014, and traveled throughout the state to try and understand what issues were facing the Alaska providers on many different fronts, whether it be the telephone companies, whether they be the broadband providers, which can be the same, whether they be the local broadcasters. We tried to tackle every single element and understand what their unique issues—and I walked away completely with a different mindset of what Alaska is.

It is a unique place that is not copied or comparable in anywhere else in the United States. So that helps frame my addressing of issues at the FCC. And we have a lot of them. Let's not kid ourselves.

We have a full plate of issues that we try to address. And the top of those issues are making sure that broadband is able to be reached to all Americans that would like access. And that's very hard in places like Alaska, where the terrain's incredibly difficult and



... I walked away completely with a different mindset of what Alaska is.

It is a unique place that is not copied or comparable anywhere else in the United States.

Mike O'Rielly

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

challenging. And the building cycle is so short. And the supply—getting supplies to the area can be just as difficult.

So we're cognizant of that, or certainly I am, and we try to work through—I was talking to your telephone companies, which happened to be in a different room this morning, and we were talking through issues on making sure that their survivability—I was one of the lead authors of what's known as the Alaska plan, to try to address the funding issues in Alaska to bring some reforms in that direction and also allow broader—broadband build-out throughout the state.

We recognize that Alaska has challenges, in terms of broadband, and we are trying to face those front on. There are difficult issues that we have to face. I know one issue we were talking about just before I walked in, that I know that's front and center for many people here, and that's our Rural Health Care Program.

In my time in Alaska, I got to see the benefits of what is happening, what's able to be done in Alaska. In other parts of the United States, the program is used for much higher bandwidth purposes, fancy gizmos that are incredibly expensive. But in Alaska, it is about basic healthcare services. Reforms, we haven't run into a problem in that regard, because our program is oversubscribed, and we're trying to figure out what to do for our budgetary purposes.

Mr. Forsgren, Jr.

Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

There are a lot of major issues in Alaska related to EPA.

In February, Administrator Pruitt made a decision to halt the proposed withdrawal of the determination to proceed with the 404—for the regional administrator to proceed with the 404 veto on the Pebble Mine project in Alaska.

That's a very long-winded way of saying we're stopping where we are. Nothing's going to go forward until the—we have a much better idea what the project is, and then we're going to have another round of public comments.

The administrator thought we would be putting out—we would be doing—going to another round of public comment sooner than we have, but frankly we're not far enough developed that it would be very helpful to anyone in the community until we have a much better sense of what the permit might actually look like, to open it back up for comments at this time.

We do—there will be another round of comments, but right now we don't believe it would be particularly helpful. And we have received a lot of comments from the public on that score.

The second thing that's taking up a whole large percentage of my time is the scope of the Waters of the United States regs. We have a two-, maybe three-, depending on how you count the applicability rate, part rule on—the President's given us direction to withdraw—

to propose the repeal of the 2015 Waters of the U.S. regs to—and to replace them with a new set of regulations.

The public comment on the step one proposal to withdraw and temporarily replace—or to permanently repeal and to temporarily replace with the 87 rules, we are—the comment—we opened up for initial comment period, that comment period is closed, although there may—very well may be a supplemental coming out in the near future to answer a few more questions that people might have on the repeal aspect.

And then there will—and then in the not very distant future we will see a proposed regulation on what—how we would propose to restructure and rewrite the scope of the Waters of the U.S. regs.

We have undergone extensive tribal consultations, including with a lot—a number of Alaska Native corporations and tribes. We have had extensive federalism discussions with states, and we're starting to go to work. And that process will continue through the comment period and through the rest of the process.

I would like to give you a little heads-up on where we are. We were quite successful. Congress was quite generous this year in providing funding for a number of infrastructure initiatives, some of which applied directly to Alaska villages or Alaska—the Alaskan community, and some would be—a number would within eligible if cities or villages would choose to take advantage of them.

On the “would be available to,” we received a significant increase in a loan guarantee program called the WIFIA, Water Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act, and that allows a very creative—allows us to pay for up to 49 percent of projects.

Projects could be bundled throughout an entire region to come up with the financing for water infrastructure. And the beauty of it is the terms could be very flexible, up to 35 years and at the treasury rate.

Those projects would have and can be virtually anything that could possibly deal with wastewater, drinking water-related projects. The others more specifically is they provided the \$20 million in fiscal 2018 for the Alaska Native villages STAG funding program. We look forward to looking for opportunities to get that money out the door to—while the 2019 President's budget did not fund any—what's referred to as regional projects, with one exception. They provided—the budget provided for \$3 million for Alaska Native village infrastructure.

Now, we'll see what—I suspect Congress might have—be a little more generous than that, but at least the President's budget does recognize the critical importance of getting infrastructure to the Alaska Native villages.

Dr. Farrell

Executive Director, U.S. Arctic Research Commission

So we—the commission's been looking very carefully at AFI's [as spoken] priorities. We looked at your white paper carefully, we read that, we read your priorities. We wanted to make sure that we spoke to your interests, not just tell you what we are doing. So I have crafted this to look at what your interests are and address them accordingly, based on how we vector into what you do.

We've read what your priorities and interests are here, and you call for investment in many things. And, really, investments are decisions, decisions that have to be made. And those decisions should be informed by knowledge.



... investments are decisions, decisions that have to be made. And those decisions should be informed by knowledge.

Dr. John Farrell

Executive Director, U.S. Arctic Research Commission

We heard Senator Murkowski speak about this. It's not just about the dollars. It's also about the education.

The commission knows that knowledge can be co-produced by indigenous and nonindigenous experts. And knowledge comes from a lot of places. It comes from observations, comes from facts, research, hypotheses and models that help explain the observations that enable us to develop forecasts.

So I was very pleased today when I heard so many prior speakers talking about research and science and how important it is to many things we do, from Admiral McAllister to Senator Sullivan, who said Alaska can be the place that can be the hub of science and research.

Senator Murkowski says you can't get the money until you educate and get the understanding. And Secretary Zinke said, on the basis of science, how would you manage our lands?

So I feel, in some ways, the Arctic 2 Commission has succeeded in sharing our mentioning and having it carried by so many others.

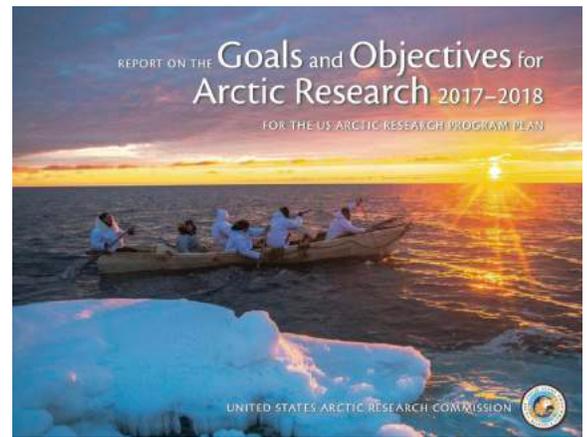
So the Arctic Research Commission, like my colleague, Mike, is a commission. It's a federal agency. It's an advisory body. We have eight presidentially appointed commissioners. As I mentioned Fran Ulmer is there. There are several other Alaskans on the commission currently, including two Alaska Natives, Mary Pete and Marie Greene.

I think it's important to stress a lot of times people hear about researchers and scientists and think of eggheads or people that are only thinking in the clouds or aren't really thinking about kind of the interests of the people in the Arctic. And I hope that you'll be

John Farrell US Arctic Research Commission

AFN calls for investment in:

- National security
- Energy
- Transportation
- Communities



convinced that's not been the case with the Arctic Research Commission. We have been around for almost 35 years.

By law, we have an Alaska Native as one of our commissioners, and oftentimes we've had two Alaska Native commissioners at a time.

And I'll just show you quickly some of our prior commissioners. Those are the staff. There's only three civil servants in our entire agency. We have an office in Anchorage and one in D.C.

So in the back of the room, we have Richard Glenn who was—over 20 years was a commissioner with us, on the left there.

We have Mary Jane Fate on the right, and her daughter was here. She's the mother-in-law to Senator Sullivan. She was our commissioner for several years.

After Mary Jane Fate, we had Vera Metcalf there on the left, who is the Executive Director of the Eskimo Walrus Commission.

After Vera, we had Helvi Sandvik, who was CEO of NANA Development Corporation for several years. We also had Edward Itta—may he rest in peace—who was an excellent commissioner. He brought a lot of humor and a lot of wisdom. There he is explaining to non-Alaskans where Alaska is and where he lives by using that famous hand example. And he always oftentimes brought his wife Elsie with us. And there they are at a reindeer-processing plant in Finland. We miss him.

And we also have had on our commission, and continue to have, these two representatives, Mary Pete and Marie Greene from the NANA region.

So we have had a long history of Alaska Natives informing us and educating us and telling what priorities we should focus on when it comes to research and science.

For the commission, the area of Alaska that we focus on is the Arctic region, which is north of the Yukon, Porcupine and Kuskokwim Rivers, and includes all of the Bering Sea and includes areas in the north of the Arctic Circle. So it's not the Southeast part of Alaska.

By law, the commission has these following duties. We develop policy, we facilitate cooperation within the federal government, we review research programs, we provide recommendations to improve data sharing, and we cooperate with the State of Alaska very closely and internationally.

Each year by—every two years by law, we have to release a report, called the Goals and Objectives Report, to the President and Congress, which gives what the commission recommends to the government, in terms of what it should focus on with respect to research.

And I have copies of this report out at the registration desk, along with other paper materials that I'll be talking about today.

And the six goals that we have identified in that current goals report—we're preparing a new one for next year—are listed here. Broadly speaking, they are focusing on environmental change, human health, energy, with a particular focus on efficiency and renewables.

The “built” environment, we've heard a lot about infrastructure, how very important it is to bring engineers and environmental scientists together.

Cultures and community resilience is an important one. And international scientific cooperation.

In terms of process, the commission informs an interagency group, which then conveys that information to the White House. The law that created us has specific steps where OMB is supposed to coordinate and review budget requests of agencies to see how they link into Arctic research. Congress then authorizes and appropriates.

And then interestingly, in the law, it actually gives the commission the power, if you will, to review that request and report to Congress on its adherence to a plan. So it's an interesting process.

If you would like to learn more about a lot of the research that we do, please go to this website, which is IARPCcollaborations.org. Anyone in this room can join the discussion to learn more about different collaboration teams that are working on a variety of subjects.

6 priority goals for Arctic research

1. Environmental Change
2. Human Health
3. Energy (efficiency and renewables)
4. The “Built Environment”
5. Cultures and Community Resilience
6. International Scientific Cooperation



Federal Arctic research policy/process



USARC set goals → IARPC adopts, creates & executes research plan → White House: OMB/OSTP coordinate & review budget → Congress: Authorizes & Appropriates

“The Commission shall, after submission of the President's annual budget request, review the request and report to Congress on adherence to the Plan.”

Three working groups that the commission works very hard on in the state of Alaska are here, and I have got paper on all of this at the registration desk. The commission decided that three areas were worth us investing a lot of time and effort to convene a dialogue and to get some research priorities on these three topics.

These three working groups involve federal representatives, State of Alaska representatives, and from a lot of Alaska Native organizations, like ANTHC and so on. So there's a group on Alaska rural water and sanitation. There's one on mental health, behavioral and mental health and suicidality. And the third one is on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Again, all of this is on our website. I encourage you to check that out.

And finally we put out a daily Arctic update newsletter that has a lot of information, trying to just share what we know. And we welcome you to submit comments to us. If you would like us to post your event or information, we'd be happy to do that. We have about 3,000 subscribers. And we're also on Facebook and Twitter.

Q: Ms. Vanderpool: Hello. My name is Angela Janice Vanderpool, and I work for Chugachmiut, which is a tribal health organization in Alaska.

And this question is for Mr. O'Rielly of the FCC. About a year ago Chugachmiut put in an application for the subsidy for broadband for our clinics, and ten months later we heard that we would be funded at 85 percent. And since then, there's been some requests that FCC perhaps provide a waiver for Alaskan organizations, because—you know, to hear ten months later that we're going to have to come up with a significant amount of money to keep our operations as-is, we spent a lot of time building our health-delivery systems around advances in broadband. And it would be a real shame for us to put aside our telehealth carts, to abandon our electronic health records, which we're mandated to provide. And all of this is in the name of patient health, safety and lives. And I'm hoping that FCC will seriously consider that request to provide a waiver for Alaska.



Mr. O’Rielly

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

Well, thank you for sharing your story. I’m not familiar with your exact waiver petition, but we do have a number—we have a quasi-governmental organization that oversees the processing of the materials that are before the commission. It’s called USAC. They’ve had some problems. You probably have been dealing with them, I suspect, and got your answer that—you’re not unlike many people who have gotten an answer that was probably not as thoughtful as it should have been, and more design—they have had so many problems in the organization, I’ve sought to root out some of the—some of their—their operations have been problematic for quite a long time.

But to a larger point, I’m cognizant and aware of the need to look at the bigger picture on Alaska, and I will certainly want to follow up with you. And we can see where that waiver petition is in the process.

Q: Ms. Bissett: *My name’s Hallie Bissett. I’m with Alaska Native Village Corporation Association. I just wanted to say thank you to Robb Wong for all of the work that you’ve done in our community in the last couple of years to work with us to really streamline and make efficient the SBA, just like you did with the presentation there. You see a theme going.*

And the question I have, Robb, is: Does the SBA plan to have a tribal coordinator or a Native American, an American Indian coordinator like we have seen in the past with SBA, and why and/or why not?

Mr. Wong

Associate Administrator, Office of Government Contracting and Business Development, Small Business Administration

The short answer to you is: Yes, I believe so. The tribal representative is not in—they are physically in my office, sharing office space, but that goes under a person Allen Gutierrez, who I deal with almost every day. And I know that he takes it very seriously, and I believe that he is searching for someone.

To that point also, as you know, we are having a tribal consultation on May 9th in Anchorage. So whether we have a representative or not, I will be there with John Klein; Allen Gutierrez, who runs that office; and also the regulatory official, Nate Miller. So we’re all going to be up there on May 9th.

So if you have ways that you think you would like to—you know, things that we’re not doing now that you would like us to advocate for or to work for, please let us know.



A lot of times we're provided with plans or strategies to comment on after the fact via tribal consultation, but we'd like to be part of that conversation and develop those agendas, especially for Arctic research and our priorities.

Melanie Bahnke
President & CEO, Kawerak, Inc.

Q: Ms. Bahnke: *I'm Melanie Bahnke. I represent Kawerak, which is a tribal consortium in the Bering Strait region of Alaska, the chokepoint through the Northwest Arctic Passage.*

As the Arctic—the interest in the Arctic heightens, we're seeing a lot more researchers coming into our neck of the woods.

And my first comment is to Mr. Kennedy, with NOAA. Last week, NOAA had a research vehicle near St. Lawrence Island. And we're right in the middle of our spring walrus hunting and whaling. And one of our esteemed elder hunters communicated, asking NOAA to please move because, like I said, we don't time when the animals come. They don't have a year-in-advance notice to us of when they're going to show up so that we can harvest them.

And the response, I think, could have been a little bit better. The response was along the lines of: Our research is being done to protect your subsistence activities.

And we appreciate the research. We know there's a lot of research that needs to be done, and we welcome it. But we ask that you coordinate with us in realtime. I know your research activities are planned well in advance. But like I said, we don't get to—the animals don't necessarily follow a calendar, and our ability to harvest them is really important for us.

So I ask that you coordinate with the local tribes or tribal organizations like Kawerak as you're conducting your research.

That leads into a comment to Dr. Farrell. Thank you for all of the research that the U.S. Arctic Research Commission does. We're grateful for that.

As you update your 2011, I believe it is, you said your Arctic strategy—well, actually that's NOAA that's doing that. So my comment is to Mr. Kennedy and to Dr. Farrell as well. It would be great if tribes could be provided some resources to develop tribal protocols around research. A lot of times we're provided with plans or strategies to comment on after the fact via tribal consultation, but we'd like to be part of that conversation and develop those agendas, especially for Arctic research and our priorities.

I think it would be great if we could collaborate and not just comment on your plans and strategies after the fact. So some resources to help us develop our tribal protocols would be great. We're not just getting researchers from the U.S. We're seeing Chinese vessels and other foreign-flagged researchers that are coming into our neck of the woods.

Mr. Kennedy

Senior Advisor for the Arctic Region, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

I'd like to at least respond to the first issue you brought up. One of the things I was going to mention, but felt like I ought to wait is the agreement standard of care that NOAA's been involved in and trying to put together with subsistence communities and other federal agencies. And although I have not been directly involved in the discussions around the issue that you're talking about, from what I have been involved, I think the research was planned, yes, quite some time ago around where they thought historically the ice would be. Turns out the ice wasn't there. The ice had moved dramatically north, much more than any of us guessed. And as a result, we moved north to be where the seals were, seal study.

But we have said that we want to honor the standard of care agreement, and I think this was an unfortunate one that got away from us. And we certainly have had a very detailed discussion within NOAA about how we could correct, when we do have a major change in our research mission, trying to get ahead of notifying the appropriate folks. And that didn't happen in this case. And I think there's some real regret that that's the way it went, and we are trying to correct that.

Dr. Farrell

Executive Director, U.S. Arctic Research Commission

Only in terms of the protocols may be—may not be exactly what you're looking for, but there is a move afoot to revise the principles for the conduct of Arctic research that's being initiated by the National Science Foundation and the interagency, where they are engaging regarding protocols for research and constructive co-production of knowledge with the indigenous groups.

So there's a Federal Register notice about that, and I could easily provide you at least more information to make contacts with the group that is revising that document.

Mr. O'Rielly

Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

So you have my commitment that I'm going to work to protect the good work that has happened in Alaska under the program that is worth only so many things. Like I said, there's five of us, and I don't always win that point.

But I am—and you can see my statement on this particular issue when we looked at the budget. There have been calls to double the budget. There have been calls to shift money away from Alaska. And I fought to make sure that that the commitments that were

previously made and the good work that is done—because if you look at the difference—and I kind of talked about this, and I think we talked prior, you know, the work that’s done in Alaska is somewhat basic communications that’s absolutely necessary.

You see in the rest of the nation it’s some really fancy high-end equipment. It’s very important as well, but, you know, in many instances—and the carts that I saw were in very remote areas, very remote communities that had nothing else. That was the center point of healthcare, and there was no other doctor. It wasn’t about high-end x-ray, you know, and high-end tests. It was about basic care and critical needs that—and emergencies, and trying to figure out if you had to get somebody out, and could you get somebody out to either Anchorage or the regional hospital or had to get Seattle, if need be.

A full transcript and presentation materials are available at: nativefederation.org/alaskaday2018.

Reception



Reception





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