



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

JUL 30 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Thomas Donilon, National Security Advisor
Cecilia Munoz, Director, Domestic Policy Council
Nancy Sutley, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality
John Holdren, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy
Heather Zichal, Deputy Assistant to the President for Energy and Climate Change

From: David J. Hayes, Chair, Interagency Working Group on Coordination on Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska

Subject: Addressing Science and Planning Needs for Energy and Other Development Activities in Alaska

SUMMARY

Executive Order 13580 established the Interagency Working Group on Coordination of Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska (the Alaska Interagency Working Group) in order to facilitate the orderly and environmentally sound development of renewable and conventional energy in the oceans, coastal regions, and interior lands of Alaska. In addition to coordinating on-going permitting activities related to energy development in Alaska, the Alaska Interagency Working Group will address two key systemic issues: (1) sharing of scientific and environmental information;ⁱ and (2) developing a framework for making integrated Arctic management decisions.ⁱⁱ

As explained below, the Alaska Interagency Working Group will be moving forward with the preparation of a formal report that will address both of these issues. The initial report will be presented to the President by December 31, 2012. In light of the need to engage with a wide variety of governmental entities and stakeholders, including the State of Alaska, Native Alaskans, industry, and conservation groups, in developing this report and gathering information relevant to potential infrastructure development in sectors beyond the energy sector, the Alaska Interagency Working Group will coordinate with, and provide updates on their activities to, the heads of the National Security Staff, Domestic Policy Council, Council on Environmental Quality, Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the National Economic Council.

BACKGROUND

Sharing Scientific and Environmental Information and Traditional Knowledge

Based on a dialogue involving the Alaska Interagency Working Group, the Arctic Research Commission, and a broad number of stakeholders with an interest in ensuring that decision-makers have access to the best scientific information and traditional knowledge, the Working Group has determined that the large body of knowledge that continues to develop around the Arctic can and should be more easily accessible to agencies that have decisionmaking responsibilities in the Arctic and to the general public.

To address this important need, the Alaska Interagency Working Group will partner with the Arctic Research Commission and scientific communities to explore how to develop a more centralized and more accessible database of scientific information and traditional knowledge relevant to integrated and ecosystem-based resources management in the Arctic, including onshore and offshore development activities in Alaska. This undertaking will bring an Arctic focus to the President's Open Government initiative and the National Ocean Policy. In doing so, the Working Group will build upon existing data sources, such as the North Slope Science Initiative's Data Catalogue, Arctic ERMA, regional observing systems, the University of Alaska's Geographic Information Network of Alaska, and the Alaska Data Integration Working Group efforts and draw from existing agreements with industry in the region to share data. The Alaska Interagency Working Group will focus on how best to ensure that cultural and traditional knowledge is included in the scientific information that is available to decision-makers and the public.

Developing Integrated Arctic Management

The Alaska Interagency Working Group will develop a transparent, disciplined, and analytic approach that will generate the information and analysis needed to make sound, long-term planning decisions.

As a member of the eight-nation Arctic Council, the United States has embraced the concept of using an "ecosystem-based management" approach to assist in making sound decisions regarding potential future infrastructure development in the Arctic. This type of management approach recognizes that engaging in a sector-by-sector, project-by-project, or issue-by-issue evaluation of future infrastructure development activities in the Arctic is sub-optimal and could result in decisions with long-term negative consequences, especially given the rapid change that is occurring in the Arctic's sensitive coastal, terrestrial, and marine ecosystems, and the special rights and needs of Alaska Natives and other subsistence users in the Arctic. Getting it right in the Arctic requires a more integrated, comprehensive approach that simultaneously evaluates commercial needs and trends, environmental trends and ecological processes, and cultural considerations.

The Alaska Interagency Working Group will be taking the first key steps in building a more integrated, comprehensive approach to evaluating long-term issues when evaluating

potential infrastructure development in the Alaskan Arctic. Consistent with the principles behind the Arctic Council's ecosystem-based management approach to evaluating long-term development issues, the Alaska Interagency Working Group will prepare an initial report that address key elements of an "Integrated Arctic Management" framework:

(1) The identification of ecologically and culturally important areas, biota and processes, natural resources, and key drivers of environmental changes in the Arctic, without regard to jurisdictional lines; (2) the identification of anthropogenic, environmental, and climatological trends that affect these resources over time; and (3) the identification of commercial, societal, and governmental needs and trends that could lead to future infrastructure related needs in the Arctic, again without regard to jurisdictional lines.

Completion of these initial key steps will lay the foundation for a full dialogue on how best to develop and apply an Integrated Arctic Management approach when making important development decisions in the Arctic, including identifying economic, cultural, and environmental goals, objectives, and scenario planning.

ⁱ "Ensuring the sharing and integrity of scientific and environmental information and cultural and traditional knowledge among agencies" to support sound decision-making in the Arctic.

ⁱⁱ "Engaging in long term planning and ensuring coordination with the appropriate Federal entities related to ... the development of necessary infrastructure" to support potential future activities in the Arctic.

cc: Members and Participants of the Interagency Working Group on Coordination of Domestic Energy Development and Permitting in Alaska include:
 Bob Perciasepe, Deputy Administrator, Environmental Policy Agency
 Ashton B. Carter, Deputy Secretary, Department of Defense
 Jane Holl Lute, Deputy Secretary, Department of Homeland Security
 John Porcari, Deputy Secretary, Department of Transportation
 Kathleen Merrigan, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture
 Daniel Poneman, Deputy Secretary, Department of Energy
 Rebecca Blank, Acting Secretary and Deputy Secretary, Department of Commerce
 Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 Dr. Marcia McNutt, Director, United States Geological Survey
 Dr. Subra Suresh, Director, National Science Foundation
 Fran Ulmer, Chair, Arctic Research Commission
 Robert J. Papp, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard
 Jo Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Larry Persily, Federal Coordinator, AK Natural Gas Transportation Projects