

State of Alaska's Climate Change Policy

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

8 **Introduction**

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

20
21 Climate change intersects with many aspects of life in Alaska and the resultant and significant
22 uncertainty that confronts the state requires management and stewardship encompassing food,
23 cultural and life systems, security and wealth creation. The necessary tools to meet this
24 challenge must include climate-responsive policy, strategy, and planning that result in
25 immediate, near term, and future actions. The state economy is – and will remain for the
26 immediate future – dependent on extractive resource development, including oil and
27 promisingly natural gas production. These resources are finite and contribute to carbon
28 emissions. There is an economic and ethical imperative to pursue a transition away from a
29 global dependence on fossil fuels and toward renewable sources of energy. The state recognizes
30 its obligation to encourage this transition and increase resilience in the face of climate change,
31 while also maintaining Alaska's economic viability. With a strategic, holistic approach, these
32 aims are not in conflict.

33
34 The state's work with partners - including federal agencies, tribes and communities - will realign
35 and create realistic expectations for an economic and energy transition, including attracting
36 investment and financing for clean energy, technological innovation, and new industries.
37 Alaska's efforts to reduce carbon emissions domestically fit within a broader global leadership
38 effort but are entirely driven by and responsive to where Alaska is today, and where it can be in
39 the future. The state will pursue partnerships and international cooperation with countries or
40 regions of the world that demonstrate an established or emerging leadership role in decreasing
41 greenhouse gas emissions.

43 **Value Statement**

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

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

7
8 As the state moves forward with a strategic climate action plan, it will use values of equity,
9 inclusion and justice, science and technology, and communication across local communities, the
10 state, nation and world. Alaska's climate change policy and action plan will ensure that the
11 benefits and burdens of our changing climate are fairly distributed across our state and our
12 communities. The policy and goals are rooted in and responsive to the values held by Indigenous
13 cultures and the many other cultures and peoples who call Alaska home. Identifying and
14 achieving strategies that promote northern resilience and innovation is best fostered when all
15 voices and visions are included into decision-making processes.

16 17 **State of Alaska Climate Change Policy**

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

24
25 In furtherance of this, the state's climate change policy will serve as a holistic plan for the long-
26 term resilience and sustainability of the state, including communities, local economies, and
27 future opportunities. Specifically, it is the policy of the state of Alaska to:

- 28
29 1) Ensure safe, resilient, and healthy communities that are sustainable for future
30 generations by taking steps that include gathering necessary data, supporting
31 community, state and national risk and resilience planning, and implementing
32 adaptation measures.
- 33
34 2) Take the steps necessary to diversify the state economy, increase energy efficiency and
35 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including fostering a transition to renewable
36 sources of energy, supporting technological and process innovation across all sectors,
37 and increasing residential, commercial and public energy efficiency.
- 38
39 3) Identify climate change as a slow-moving disaster, the implications of which—both in
40 terms of contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to communities and
41 natural resources—must be factored into all government decisions and plans.
- 42
43 4) Make decisions that are based on adaptive management, the best available science and
44 Indigenous Knowledge, and adoption of a One-Health approach that recognizes that
45 people and their environment are inextricably intertwined.
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- 1 5) Provide, leverage or obtain the funding necessary to ensure that the communities,
2 businesses, and people of the state successfully implement the actions necessary for
3 long-term sustainability.
4

5 **Goals and Objectives**

6
7 **Policy Statement 1:** Ensure safe, resilient, and healthy communities that are sustainable for
8 future generations by taking steps that include gathering necessary data, supporting
9 community, state and national risk and resilience planning, and implementing adaptation
10 measures.

11
12 Goal 1.1: Provide a robust system of community risk monitoring, assessment and planning.

13
14 Objective 1.1A: Increase the availability of monitoring equipment to track and understand
15 sea level, permafrost and other environment changes, as well as mapping, bathymetry and
16 climate modeling research.

17
18 Objective 1.1B: Increase the efficacy and accessibility of available risk assessment tools in
19 collaboration with communities.

20
21 Objective 1.1C: Conduct and support prioritized community and regional risk and resilience
22 planning in partnership with local and regional leaders, and including strong public
23 engagement.

24
25 Goal 1.2: Implement an effective, efficient system for implementation of community
26 adaptation responses.

27
28 Objective 1.2A: In partnership with federal agencies, develop an implementation plan with
29 associated funding in place for threatened and at risk communities.

30
31 Objective 1.2B: Incorporate best practices and Indigenous Knowledge into adaptation
32 actions that include protect in place, community migration, and community relocation.

33
34 Objective 1.2C: Consider adaptation processes and technology an export opportunity, such
35 that Alaskans are able to meet a global demand for climate change adaptation services.
36

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

41
42 Goal 2.1: Reduce carbon emissions in Alaska by 2030 by increasing clean energy and energy
43 efficiency consistent with current state energy policy.

44
45 Objective 2.1A: Increase the implementation of renewable energy and energy efficiency
46 standards on the North Slope and along the Railbelt, and invest in renewable energy and
47 energy efficiency measures across rural Alaska.
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1 Objective 2.1B: Update design and engineering standards to incorporate expected climate
2 change metrics, work toward net zero energy public facilities, and implement a statewide
3 residential and commercial building code that responds to regional differentiation.
4

5 Objective 2.1C: Increase the use of renewable and low emission energy resources in air, rail,
6 road and marine transportation, and consider a ban on heavy fuel oil use in maritime
7 operations.
8

9 Objective 2.1D: Periodically monitor for and report on emissions of GHG and the success of
10 efforts to reduce emissions across the Alaska economy, government and communities.
11

12 Goal 2.2: Increase the value creation from blue and green economic activity and promote
13 technological and process innovation within emission producing activities.
14

15 Objective 2.2A: Increase value-added blue economic activities (e.g.; mariculture, high value
16 processing, and marine biotechnology) using clean energy.
17

18 Objective 2.2B: Support the diversification of the green economy to include tourism, clean
19 energy and built infrastructure.
20

21 Objective 2.2C: Export technological and process innovation as it relates to carbon emission
22 mitigation.
23

24 Goal 2.3 Develop an energy transition strategy that leverages current and potential oil and
25 gas development for the benefit of increased clean energy alternatives, for different sectors
26 and across an appropriate timeline.
27

28 Objective 2.3A: Promote and develop natural gas as a bridge fuel for export and for
29 domestic use.
30

31 Objective 2.3B: Conduct a review of current energy use and cost by sector and fuel and
32 develop a transition plan that reduces fossil fuel use over a period of time sensitive to
33 economic and societal impact, with mitigation options in place.
34

35 **Policy Statement 3:** Identify climate change as a slow-moving disaster, the implications of
36 which—both in terms of contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impacts to communities
37 and natural resources—must be factored into all state and federal government decisions and
38 plans.
39

40 Goal 3.1: Increase public knowledge of climate change science, impacts and state action.
41

42 Objective 3.1A: Increase understanding of climate change, and its causes and impacts, at all
43 appropriate levels of education (K-12, vocational, and university)
44

45 Objective 3.1B: Sharing Alaska’s climate change story across the state, nation and globe,
46 highlighting Alaska’s significance as America’s only Arctic state.
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1 Objective 3.1C: Partner with statewide non-profit organizations to engage the public in
2 dialogue and reviews of research and government action.

3
4 Goal 3.2: Climate proof state policy and regulations.

5
6 Objective 3.2A: Conduct triennial review of climate change-relevant policy, statutes and
7 regulations to assess progress and consider updates and/or additional actions.

8
9 Objective 3.2B: Establish a Commissioner-level climate change leadership team (including
10 representation from the Governor’s office) for strategic planning and implementing actions
11 to address climate change and ocean acidification consistent with the Alaska Climate
12 Change Policy Have the Cabinet Climate Team periodically report on progress to the
13 Governor, Legislature and Alaska public.

14
15 Objective 3.2C: Sufficiently fund state participation in international climate change for a,
16 including the Arctic Council, UN IPCC, and relevant regional meetings in the U.S., E.U. and
17 Asia.

18
19 Goal 3.3: Collaborate with federal agency and other partners to implement effective
20 government actions.

21
22 Objective 3.3A: Develop a “climate collaboratory” that establishes stronger linkages
23 between government action, community decision making and academic research.

24
25 Objective 3.3B: Strengthen or create statewide network of local governments to share
26 climate change and resilience best practices and resources.

27
28 Objective 3.3C: Advocate to and cooperate with federal agencies for appropriate programs
29 to address research, adaptation and mitigation efforts, and within Congress for necessary
30 financial resources.

31
32 **Policy Statement 4:** Make decisions that are based on adaptive management, the best available
33 science and Indigenous Knowledge, and adoption of a One-Health approach that recognizes that
34 people and their environment are inextricably intertwined.

35
36 Goal 4.1: Reduce the impact of global carbon emissions and from climate change on Alaska’s
37 natural environment and ecosystem.

38
39 Objective 4.1A: Maintain sustainable and accessible fish, wildlife and plant harvest, based on
40 science- and Indigenous Knowledge-informed decision-making.

41
42 Objective 4.1B: Support research and response to ocean acidification, invasive species, and
43 migratory species.

44
45 Objective 4.1C: Adopt a One Health approach to understanding ecosystem health as part of
46 human/community health.

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

3
4 Objective 4.2A: Develop robust research-decision support systems for natural resource
5 management.

6
7 Objective 4.2B: Conduct the baseline studies necessary for community decision-making,
8 state and federal management decisions, and risk assessment.

9
10 Objective 4.2C: Invest in critical and necessary marine, air and terrestrial data gathering
11 equipment and infrastructure.

12
13 Objective 4.2D: Develop effective mechanisms for bridging Western science and Indigenous
14 Knowledge.

15
16 **Policy Statement 5:** Provide, leverage or obtain the funding necessary to ensure that the
17 communities, businesses, and people of the state successfully implement the actions necessary
18 for long-term sustainability.

19
20 Goal 5.1: Increase the financing available for clean energy and energy efficiency activities.

21
22 Objective 5.1A: Identify and work toward long-term state-led financing of clean energy and
23 energy efficiency (e.g.; Green Bank or other mechanism).

24
25 Objective 5.1B: Explore the state's ability to access or leverage Series A Venture Capital
26 funds, reinsurance programs, and other innovative opportunities for funding.

27
28 Objective 5.1C: Apply funding from energy efficiency savings to renewable energy
29 investments.

30
31 Objective 5.1D: Explore additional one-time or endowed investments that the state may
32 lead, including focused attention to science and technology and emerging clean energy
33 technology.

34
35 Goal 5.2: Implement community adaptation funding strategies.

36
37 Objective 5.2A: Mobilize private, philanthropic, state, federal and international funding
38 sources on behalf of climate change adaptation.

39
40 Objective 5.2B: Institute a climate change emergency relief fund for related and anticipated
41 threats.

42
43 Objective 5.3C: Facilitate long-term economic growth within low carbon economic
44 development.

45
46 Goal 5.3: Develop a pathway to a carbon pricing mechanism consistent with domestic
47 interests and global best practices, responsive to national trends.

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

3
4 Objective 5.3B: Maximize revenue generation from current petroleum and natural gas
5 development to support energy transition.
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