

CC-6. Coordinate Implementation of Alaska's Efforts to Address Climate Change

Policy Description

Responding to climate change and reducing GHG emissions will require a dedicated and coordinated effort. Better coordination can promote efficiencies and effectiveness in the following areas:

- Tracking climate change efforts across State agencies in Alaska;
- Communicating between State of Alaska and other efforts (e.g. Federal activities);
- Responding to expected Federal initiatives on climate change;
- Providing access to information and education resources; and
- Improving outreach to citizens and businesses on climate change.

To achieve the above, a coordinating entity is needed. This could be an Alaska Climate Change Coordinating Committee under the Subcabinet or a designated person or office that brings together representatives of State agencies. It is recommended that the Subcabinet ensure coordination of the work already started through the Advisory Committee process. If a committee or lead office is not identified, the Subcabinet should authorize a Task Force to continue to identify ways to ensure coordination among state agencies, especially on policy and strategy coordination and responses to Federal inquiries and reporting requirements. With a strong coordination effort, resources and funding can be identified, secured, and leveraged to further Alaska's climate change policies and goals.

Policy Design

Goals

The goals of coordinating climate change activities in Alaska include the following:

- Provide focus to State agency efforts as recommendations of the Subcabinet are implemented;
- Ensure that the State agency development of position papers, guidance documents, policies, procedures, and standards to establish and implement Federal and state climate change programs are coordinated;
- Provide outreach and consistent information on climate change mitigation technology and regulatory guidance to industry and the public;

- Ensure the Subcabinet’s Climate Change Strategy efforts are coordinated with the Alaska Energy Plan (see CC-4), the Alaska Municipal League, industry, the Western Climate Initiative and advisory groups working on climate change efforts in Alaska; and
- Provide a primary point of contact for Federal agencies addressing climate change in Alaska.

Activities

- Support a GHG emission reporting program and associated inventories (see CC-1) as mandated by Federal or state policies;
- Develop state government partnerships with private citizens, businesses, and local governments;
- Promote “actions” for state agencies to take to address climate change (see CC-3); and
- Provide outreach and access to information by continuing to support the Alaska Climate Change Strategy Web site (Consider evolution to a portal to provide additional information and functionality as a clearinghouse of climate change information, resources, and education materials among state agencies).

Timing and Parties Involved

This coordination effort should be initiated as soon as possible after approval by the Subcabinet of the Alaska Climate Change Strategy. Key to success of the effort will be identifying and maximizing partnerships within State Agencies, and with Federal, private and public programs. The Governor and the Governor’s Office, the Office of Management and Budget, the Climate Change Sub-Cabinet, and representatives of key State Departments, including Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), and Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED) should be involved. In 2009, the Subcabinet should assess current resources and identify lead staff. Resources and staff should be committed by the end of 2009 to address the coordination goals and activities listed above. Many groups will be partners and beneficiaries of this coordinating body, including:

- Alaska State Legislature
- Alaska Climate Change Strategy Subcabinet
- State Agencies
- Alaska Municipal League
- Tribes
- Alaska Energy Authority
- Federal Agencies
- University of Alaska
- Public
- Alaska Elementary and Secondary Schools
- Industry

Implementation Mechanisms

To establish an Alaska Climate Change Coordinating Program, authorization to lead the effort must be provided by the Subcabinet. Additionally, funding for activities may be required. The Subcabinet should submit legislative or budget documentation necessary to procure the resources and authority to charter this coordination effort. The ADEC will continue to have responsibilities for permitting, database, and reporting tools for administering a GHG Reporting Program (see CC-1). Appropriate tools and skills must be put in place to support coordination and outreach efforts – including technology and training as necessary.

Related Programs/Policies in Place

Creating a coordinating function with the mission of tracking climate change and coordinating the State's response will help to ensure the success of the other policies in the Alaska Climate Change Strategy. Staff tasked with this effort can also serve as key liaisons and resources for the private sector if or when the State enacts regulations governing GHG emissions or reporting. A Web portal would serve as an information hub to provide outreach for preparing for and responding to climate change, and for efforts to monitor, measure and research climate change.

Many state agencies already have existing staff that deal with climate change issues and outreach. This option will not fund these positions or create new ones within these agencies, but would serve to coordinate and complement these activities.

Key Uncertainties

Challenges include engaging all agencies with responsibilities for addressing climate change, establishing clear responsibilities for coordinating roles, identifying needed funding to carry out the coordination, organizing information to present to the public, and identifying processes to maintain and update a Web site.

Benefits

Creating a coordination function is essential to track and provide some cohesion to the state's response to the Subcabinet recommendations. It will also help to educate the State agencies to educate businesses, agencies, and individuals seeking knowledge about climate change programs and policies, improving overall understanding of climate change issues. Finally, it will provide a means for State agencies to share information and coordinate interactions with on climate change with the Federal government.

Costs

Costs primarily entail resources for personnel to provide the point of coordination, including salaries and benefits, potentially contracting costs to develop materials and support a Web portal, and training costs to ensure staff have skills needed to provide outreach and education.

Feasibility Issues

Key feasibility issues include identifying a funding source and appropriately coordinating across existing programs. In addition, the effort needs to be flexible and generate sufficient political will to be effective and sustained.

Status of Group Approval

TBD – [until MAG moves to final agreement]

Level of Group Support

TBD – [until MAG moves to final agreement]

Barriers to Consensus

TBD – [undetermined until final vote by the MAG]