



August 24, 2009

To: Adaptation Advisory Group
Cc: Jackie Poston, Jan Caulfield, Nancy Tosta
Fr: Tony Nakazawa, Member of Natural Systems TWG
Re: **Reconsideration of NS-6**

I would like to thank the AAG for reconsidering the wording relating to the Natural Systems Technical Working Group (NSTWG) Summary Chapter (May 27) to be retained as is. The current wording for the NS-6 summary is:

NS-6 Support Local Sustainable Agriculture in Alaska

The State of Alaska will develop a program to support sustainable agriculture in Alaska that will improve, secure and sustain the supply of quality, affordable food for all Alaskans, to respond to new challenges and opportunities presented by a changing climate and other future challenges (e.g., increasing food transportation costs to and within Alaska). NS-6 recommends four key actions to increase food security, to be led by the DNR Division of Agriculture:

- 1. Encourage community-based agriculture.*
- 2. Research the magnitude and composition of food consumption in the state.*
- 3. Research the sources of food supply and the risk associated with high reliance on imported foods.*
- 4. In cooperation with an ad hoc Alaska food coalition (including other agencies, University, stakeholders), develop a strategic Alaska Food Policy to increase reliance on locally produced food sources through agriculture, seafood harvesting, and subsistence activities, including enhanced intrastate marketing of Alaska grown products.*

Enhancing food security through locally sustainable food sources can address potential interruptions in current sources, increase availability of quality, affordable food for Alaskans, increase business opportunities, improve nutrition and health, and provide socio-cultural benefits.

These actions fit within the framework of the Division of Agriculture's 2008 Strategic Plan – which calls for addressing climate change effects on Alaska's agriculture sector and increasing local sustainable agriculture – and could be implemented in the short- to mid-term. Funding for two positions in the Division of Agriculture is recommended to lead and accomplish these tasks; as well as moderate funding for research on Alaska's food supply and to support meetings of the Alaska food coalition.

NS-6 is one of seven adaptation options recommended by the Natural Systems TWG **targeted to sustaining the natural ecosystem services that meet Alaskan's essential needs for food, water, renewable resource economies, community stability and safety, and cultural well-being.**

Over the course of this year long plus effort, we have received input and gathered information from various members of the Alaska agricultural community as well as others as to the critical nature of Alaska agriculture and food security. These important considerations are summarized below:

1. Local Government - Significance of Local Food Production and Food Security - Food security and community stability were critical discussion points during the Alaska Municipal Leagues discussion on *Communities Conference on Climate Change*, which was held in conjunction with the Alaska Forum on the Environment last February 2009. (Source: Alaska Municipal League)
2. Politics – The 2008 congressional race addressed Alaska's food security. Our food security is challenged due to Alaska's remote location, rising cost of transportation and shrinking farm acreage, all of which will be *exacerbated by predicted impacts of climate change*. (Source: Alaska Daily News)
3. University research indicates that *multiple climatic and socioeconomic drivers have come in recent years to interfere with the ability of Alaska's "bush" communities to achieve food security* with locally available food resources. (Source: UAF Dept. of Anthropology)
4. Alaska Village/Community Sustainability - In particular, **climate change not only adversely impacts subsistence hunting and fishing, but also food storage practices**. Research conducted in 2001 by the Alaska WIC office indicated 37% of rural Alaska residents reported some level of food insecurity and 16% reported actual reported periods of hunger. (Source: American Public Health Association)

We had thought that the May 27 report to the Adaptation Advisory Group (AAG) was essentially in final draft form, since the AAG had been briefed on the Natural Systems

recommendations several times prior and had never questioned the inclusion of NS-6 in this section. When told about the AAG's unexpected action at the June 19 meeting, the people and organizations that had provided input to the NS-6 recommendation were very disappointed that Alaska's agriculture and food security had been reduced to such a small voice in the overall draft report to the Governor's Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change. The topic of agriculture and food security will most definitely impact all communities in Alaska, especially smaller, more rural villages. (Note: Input on NS-6 was received from Alaska Division of Agriculture representatives, University of Alaska Fairbanks researchers and educators, and the Alaska Farm Bureau, as well as community leaders and elected representatives and others.)

Eliminating NS-6, or at best parsing it out to separate sections of the report due to the line of reasoning that *a warming climate will translate to an economic opportunity for Alaskan agriculture*, is a very simplistic and disappointing result that is not responsive to the significance of the specific work outlined in NS-6. The NSTWG recommended specific adaptation approaches and actions in NS-6 that would not be conveyed to the Sub-Cabinet if this recommendation is eliminated or substantially changed. Addressing NS-6 *Support Local Sustainable Agriculture in Alaska* in this manner would not be an acceptable acknowledgement of the issues discussed over the course of the development of this important recommendation.

Someone once said to me – “if you eat you are involved in agriculture”

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Nakazawa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Tony Nakazawa