

HC1. Establish an Office of Climate Change Coordination.

Establish an Office of Climate Change Coordination to support vulnerable communities in dealing with complex issues related to climate change that require coordination among multiple state and federal agencies, local governments, NGOs, and others. Note that this policy option is very similar to the recommendations of the Immediate Action Work Group (IAWG); with this option providing another perspective on the same issue. These policy options should not be treated separately, but should inform one another to create the most cost effective organization to address the problems identified both here and in the IAWG recommendation.

Option Description

The Issue: The traditional way of life in much of rural Alaska is at risk. Alaska Native villagers, rural Alaskans, and other vulnerable communities are undergoing a series of challenges due to climate change, deteriorating economic circumstances, and other factors. Rapid climate change brings a multitude of physical impacts to villages, including erosion, subsidence, floods, and storm surges. In some cases, these impacts require significant emergency response efforts, massive investments in infrastructure, and full-scale community relocation. Other climatic changes include shifts and dislocations of subsistence species, which can adversely affect traditional practices and subsistence diet, leading to negative social, emotional and physical health impacts in some areas.

Overview: An array of state, federal and regional entities are responsible for delivering services to Alaskan villages and rural communities, but specific policies and regulatory constraints produce conflicting directives that prevent the coordinated delivery of vital services that will enable villages, traditional culture, and other vulnerable communities to adapt in the face of climate change. Therefore, there is a need to establish a coordinating entity with the ability to navigate these multiple bureaucracies and to leverage their resources to support vulnerable communities in emergency response, relocation, subsistence concerns, and other priorities.

Objective: The objective of this policy is to create an integrated and coherent process by which state, federal, regional, and local entities can provide rapid, coordinated, and effective relief to communities facing (and experiencing) substantial cultural, health, economic, and subsistence impacts from climate change. Objectives of this proposed agency are to navigate the complexities of requirements and mandates of multiple bureaucracies to address disaster planning and emergency response, community relocation, infrastructure development, health and cultural impacts, subsistence, and other issues. Note that policy option is similar to one recommendation of the Immediate Action Work Group (IAWG). This policy option provides another perspective on the same issue. These policy options should not be treated separately, but should inform one another to create the most cost effective organization to address the problems identified both here and in the IAWG option.

The Need: Marine and terrestrial ecosystems are changing substantially with complex feedbacks that alter habitat and the mix of fish, marine mammals, terrestrial mammals, and vegetation. Sea ice, the prime habitat of walrus and seals and the hunting grounds for rural villagers, is disappearing at a dramatic pace. Subsistence hunters must now travel increasing large distances to hunt marine mammals that are experiencing sharply decreasing populations (e.g., ring seal have decreased 30% in the last three years). This hunting occurs in unsafe, frigid waters in boats

for which gasoline costs more than \$9/gallon, a high price to pay in communities whose per capita income is one third that of urban Anchorage. Rural villagers also confront population shifts, declines, and loss of quality in other subsistence species, including fish, moose, caribou, wild berries, and other native plants.

Many aspects of the traditional and subsistence way of life are now more difficult, more dangerous, and more expensive. The cost of store bought foods, heating oil, and other daily living expenses interact with climate-related challenges to create circumstances that make survival in rural villages increasingly difficult. More than one in five individuals is below the poverty threshold, three times that of their urban counterparts. Stresses to traditional practices – including a way of life tied to being on the land and providing for one’s community – is combining with rising cost of rural living to raise the potential of serious social impacts. Other outcomes can be subtler. For example, Alex Whiting from Northwest Alaska notes that the youth and elderly depend on strong ice in fall to ice fish for saffron cod and smelt. Late freeze up and a concomitant shorter ice-fishing season lessens the opportunity for elders to pass on traditional knowledge and ethical values.

Beyond the social and cultural impacts of climate change, many villages are now facing erosion, flooding, engulfment, and disappearance of their community infrastructure. Shismaref, a community of 150 households on the northern Bering Sea, faces relocation at a cost of \$93 - \$179 million dollars. A recent GAO report found 213 predominantly Native villages, historically situated along rivers and coasts, at risk, with potential relocation costs of \$34 billion. Several existing communities must relocate immediately.

Stanley Tom of Newtok stated that one of the biggest obstacles they face in trying to relocate is the lack of a single agency or group in charge of planning and/or response. DOT can’t build an airstrip unless there is a post office; there can’t be a post office without a school; and the school has to have 25 students. But the structures needed to house 25 students can’t be built without the airstrip. These and numerous other “catch 22’s” impede an integrated, flexible, and timely response. In addition, obtaining funding for relocation has been frustrating.

Congressional hearings underscore the frustration that no single agency has been designated to take the lead on erosion and climate change issues. The Alaska Climate Impact Commission established by the Alaska Legislature likewise acknowledged in its 2008 final report that there is “a greater need for interagency action among state and federal agencies, almost exclusively where threatened communities are struggling with relocation issues” (ACIC, 2008).

Option Design

Structure: This policy is structured as a set of nine inter-linked recommendations that are designed to support the climate related challenges faced by rural communities.

Recommendation 1: Create an Office of Climate Change Coordination (henceforth Office of Coordination) within the Alaska State Government.

This Office will be a centralized entity responsible for coordinating the response of multiple state and federal agencies, local and regional governments, regional non-profit entities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), with the purpose of supporting rural villages in meeting the challenges related to relocation, emergency response, and changes in subsistence practices. The Office of Coordination would include deputy planners or case managers who are assigned

responsibility for a regional set of rural communities. A project coordinator would also be designated within each community facing critical climate-related challenges.

Objectives of the Office of Coordination:

1. In partnership with local communities, address gaps in and constraints to adaptive capacity, and develop multi-agency strategies to address them.
2. Develop Memoranda of Agreement or Cooperation between federal and state agencies that specify how they will be responsive to a given community in order to effectively address its needs. To facilitate this endeavor the Office of Coordination will also develop Memoranda of Agreement between agencies and village leadership. All of the federal and state bureaucracies would be required to identify a contact person or group within each entity and provide the resources for that group to coordinate with other entities. In addition, these in-house state and federal entities working with the Office of Coordination must have the authority to initiate any processes within their agency's decision-making authority needed to change, waive or increase the flexibility of that agency's mandate. The deputy planners will then utilize these contact points to coordinate the delivery of flexible and integrated services across a broad response team. The central coordinating entity (e.g., deputy planner) will be the single point of contact with the community and will serve as the conduit to process information to and from the community.
3. In partnership with appropriate local, regional, and statewide organizations, develop on-going forums or dialogues between elders, scientists, health professionals, policy-makers and others to discuss current and projected changes in the climate and the impacts of these changes on aspects of rural village life that include mental and physical health, economy, and culture. This may include exploring new subsistence opportunities and ways to reduce health risks in a warming climate.
4. Provide regularly updated information about measured and projected climate changes. In cooperation with the appropriate regional and statewide entities, the office will methodically develop communication strategies and protocols, including the use of proactive forms of communication that work for a given community, such as radio, Native corporation newsletters, and websites, translated into native dialects.
5. Facilitate dialogue and information exchange between subsistence users and regulatory bodies such as the Federal Subsistence Board, the Marine Mammal Commission, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Simultaneous with the development of the Office of Coordination, contact should be made with the White House office that oversees energy, climate, and environmental issues (Federal Office of Energy Coordination) as it serves many of the same functions proposed for the Office of Climate Change Coordination. Contact by the Governor's Office would hopefully provide expedited federal reaction and facilitate a number of recommended actions, e.g., designation of lead federal agencies by task, streamlining the NEPA process, etc.

Recommendation 2: Develop a Process for Prioritizing and Addressing Climate Challenged Communities.

The following outlines a deliberative process for the Office of Coordination to systematically and fairly address the challenges of communities that are most at risk; many of the steps are derived from recommendations of the Immediate Action Workgroup (IAW).

1. Develop “scenario analysis” whereby future climate conditions are analyzed to quantify the community impacts that might result.
2. Conduct meetings with leaders in at-risk communities to develop an understanding of the risks and challenges from climate change. Focus on personal safety, infrastructure, health threats and population decline. Allow the process to be driven by community leaders and landholders, with significant support from agencies.
3. Develop a method for prioritizing communities at risk, and the risks within each community. Identify and prioritize the communities at risk, the timeframe for the risk or impacts, and what is needed to address those impacts. Under this process it is likely that communities with populations too small to support a school or other basic needs (water treatment plant, airport, bulk fuel facility, city council, etc.) might receive a lower priority.
4. Make recommendations for addressing specific risks within communities. Revisit these recommendations as well as the prioritized communities annually and revise subject to new information.
5. Create strategies and measures that are tailored to the needs of the community and develop alternatives for comparison, particularly when strengthening existing community infrastructure, undertaking relocation, or making changes to community development.
6. Work with communities to obtain funding for these adaptation measures. In many instances, where communities lack staff or expertise to apply for and administer funding from grants, programs, or agencies, the respective case manager will do the groundwork to obtain and administer such funding.

For the communities that have been identified by the State as those most at risk (Newtok, Kivalina, Shismaref, Shaktoolik, Koyukuk, and Unalakleet), develop and implement:

1. Emergency response plans, including conducting training and drills
2. Community evacuation plans
3. Community wildfire management plans
4. Geologic mapping, hazard analysis and risk mitigation plans
5. Relocation plans

Recommendation 3: Create a mandate for relocation assistance within State and Federal entities.

No federal or state agency has modified their charter to establish a priority for relocation efforts. For example, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a mandate to replace what has been destroyed in situ, but does not have an obligation or directive (or resources) to rebuild infrastructure in a different location. Ensuring that agencies at all levels of government incorporate “relocation” as a vital element of their mission and designate line item funding

would accomplish the responsibilities of this task. This process needs to be implemented and coordinated through the designated lead agency (agencies).

Lack of agency flexibility exacerbates the on-the-ground difficulties for communities facing relocation. For example, Newtok is trying to transition to Mertarvik, a new community several miles south with an elevation of 400 ft. above the existing community. However, because no central fund (nor several pots of money that can be combined) currently exists for a relocation effort, the movement of the community will have to be accomplished in several transitional steps, none of which has guaranteed or even approved funding. The “pioneer” community in Mertarvik is being constructed with an “evolutionary” and modular approach. A central hub at the site will initially house construction workers. As the community transitions, this hub will be converted to administrative offices with additional “spokes” radiating from this hub to house a clinic, post office, perhaps school, maintenance facilities, and so forth. Housing will be added in clusters during this transition, as will a landing strip, and a barge landing. Unfortunately a serious drawback to this multi-staged approach is that while agencies at various levels may have mandates to provide services and help to existing communities few, if any, incorporate mandates to aid communities in relocation efforts. The inclusion of “relocation” mandates is an integral requirement to accomplish such an approach.

Recommendation 4: Designate lead agencies at the federal and state levels and outline an overall strategy for the relocation process.

Currently there is no designated lead agency at the state or federal level to coordinate the resources (personnel, technical and funding) between agencies that have independent responsibility for community infrastructure, e.g., housing, education, health, energy, and similar needs. In addition, because different components (e.g., housing, schools, health and energy) are the responsibility of different agencies with different funding cycles, priorities, and fiscal resources, any single component of the process maybe be side tracked or delayed leading to significant costs overruns in other components, i.e., the communities energy infrastructure must be in place before schools can be opened. Thirdly, a lack of a coherent and secure upfront planning/funding effort requires an enormously complicated project management approach. In fact the Division of Community and Regional Affairs using Coastal Impact Assistance monies has two contract proposals through Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development for two planning initiatives. One of these a Waterfront Management and All Hazards Plan (\$150k) that will result in a strategic management planning document that will provide criteria and guidelines for relocation and community/waterfront development at Mertarvik. The potential benefits of this planning process may be considered a model for future relocation of Alaskan villages affected by flooding and coastal erosion.

A coherent relocation planning strategy should include:

- Alternatives to a preferred relocation site.
- Evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.
- Obtain local input on community values related to alternatives.
- Evaluate the environmental effects of each relocation plan, and estimate the costs for implementing each alternative.

- Compute the life-cycle costs of not relocating the community. As part of this analysis, calculate the costs associated with various scenarios, such as relocating in ten years vs. relocating in 20 years.
- When developing relocation plans, incorporate concepts of environmental, social, and economic sustainability into community relocation design
- Determine the challenges of concurrent budgeting and meeting regulatory requirements where a collaborative effort with other agencies and organizations is proposed to implement the alternatives.
- Select the plan that provides the best overall balance to meet local needs and is cost effective, sustainable, sound from an engineering standpoint, and environmentally acceptable.

Federal agencies will probably reserve the right to designate their own lead agencies. However, considerable efficiencies can be obtained in this process if there is ongoing and thorough communication between the State Office of Climate Change Coordination and the Federal Office of Energy Coordination.

Recommendation 5: Create a Dedicated Funding Source for Relocation Efforts.

While the Office of Coordination will provide direct assistance to communities in applying and administering grant and other funding, the office will ultimately work to investigate and integrate a dedicated funding source for relocation or adaptation efforts. In addition, the Office of Coordination will seek to reduce capital budget expenditures by:

- a) exploring opportunities for greater federal funding through state co-sponsorship of projects to attract federal match dollars;
- b) developing local rock sources; and
- c) coordinating construction projects with others to reduce mobilization costs.

Nevertheless, the existing “patchwork” funding approach needs to be rationalized on an inter-agency, multiple entity, and multi-year basis. The current funding process is time-consuming and almost impossible to coordinate. In addition, DCRA stated in an October 2007 memorandum:

Communities such as Newtok are in need of “fast-tracked” funding to address critical infrastructure needs at the current village site, as well as emergency needs ... at the new village site. There are few, if any, funding sources that provide for an expedited funding process. Communities experiencing erosion are not always eligible for imminent threat funding because erosion is not considered a single event disaster.

Recommendation 6: Create a liquid funding source to provide immediate assistance.

In addition to the dedicated funding source for relocation efforts, there needs to be a readily accessible account that provides immediate cash flow and liquidity for private households, small businesses, and other entities (e.g., local IRA). This account will pay for immediate expenses as relocation efforts unfold.

Recommendation 7: Streamline the NEPA process.

Streamline the NEPA process as it applies to relocation and other climate adaptation projects by identifying a lead agency tasked with carrying community relocation efforts through the NEPA process. Communities like Newtok lack the capacity, expertise, and resources to fully carry out the NEPA process, especially when they are dealing with myriad other demands, including planning for relocation, writing grants for various aspects of the relocation process, responding to inquires from numerous agencies requiring justification for their needs and at the same time trying to sustain themselves as individuals and families. It is recommended that, through the Council on Environmental Quality, special procedures be established that tailor the NEPA process for relocation projects and to the scale of these communities. Streamlining can include appropriation of boilerplate information from existing EIS documents or a template broadly fitting the general circumstances of these riverine and coastal communities.

Recommendation 8: Provide resources to ensure cross-cultural communication and understanding within traditional languages.

Agencies and other entities should work closely with Regional Corporations, the UAF Native Language Center, and others to increase the effectiveness of their communications. For example, for many members of Newtok, but especially those who are middle aged and older, Central Yupik is their first language. Technical terms that arise during discussions about relocation, or public input during the EIS process, might be rendered literally in Yupik but do not convey the conceptual intent. For example, one of the intents of the relocation process is to design new houses for the relocation community of Mertarvik that are highly energy efficient and lower the community's carbon footprint. These new designs, which require community collaboration in their development, are running into some resistance, as households prefer the more solid model of their existing housing structure rather than the "semi-subterranean" features suggested by the Alaska Cold Climate Research Center. Perhaps concepts such as "carbon footprint" will need considerable work in translation.

Recommendation 9: Develop a flexible and responsive process to regulate subsistence access under changing climatic conditions.

Climate change is clearly a factor that impacts subsistence activities. Habitat, resource availability, and species composition are all changing. Many subsistence activities are more difficult, more dangerous, and more expensive. Factors that may restrict or impede the ability of an individual to harvest or access subsistence resources will have profound implications for the cultural fabric of rural Alaskan communities.

Typically in rural Alaska, subsistence resources provide much more than half of the local diet and in a number of places their replacement cost (at the inflated costs of local stores) often reaches two thirds of a household's disposable income. However, subsistence resources and the activities associated with the harvest of these resources provide more than food and nutrition. Participation in family and community subsistence activities, whether clamming, processing fish at a fish camp, or seal hunting with a father or brother, define and establish the sense of family and community. These activities teach how a resource can be identified, methods of harvest, efficient and non-wasteful processing of the resource, and preparation of the resource as a variety of food items. They also promote most basic ethical values in Native and rural culture - generosity, respect for the knowledge and guidance of elders, self-esteem for the successful harvest of a resource, and family and public appreciation in the distribution of the harvest. No other set of activities provides a similar moral foundation for continuity between generations.

One of the impacts of climate change is that animal species that migrate into the region have been arriving up to three weeks earlier and in some cases also leaving three weeks later. These changes extend and expand the breeding season of migratory species. When coupled with other environmental factors, such as lack of snow cover, these changes affect traditional and seasonal harvest patterns. Methods must be found, even under conditions of profound uncertainty, to sustain traditional subsistence practices.

It is recommended that the Office of Coordination have the personnel and budget to provide substantial technical assistance in helping the community organize its response to relocation and climate change issues. The Office of Coordination should seek ways to streamline communication, interaction, and burden on the community, perhaps using the Newtok experience to increase efficiency on various issues. At the least, meetings and communication can be scheduled to minimize the involvement community members during high subsistence harvest seasons.

To improve flexibility and dialogue, the Office of Coordination will work to facilitate interactions between subsistence users and regulatory bodies (such as the Federal Subsistence Board, the Marine Mammal Commission, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game), particularly where local observations may provide important data to managers on the health and quality of subsistence species. The aim of this policy is to support the ability of these bodies to adaptively and sustainably manage species from year to year in a changing climate/environment so that healthy populations are maintained in companionship with subsistence use.

In this regard and based on input from rural communities, the Office of Coordination will seek to create a citizen-based reporting system to document, potentially on-line, changes observed in rivers/lakes/aquifers, fish, bird, and animal numbers, locations, and conditions as well as berry and other gathered food conditions. Likewise, in partnership with appropriate regional and local entities, the Office of Coordination may seek to have surveillance programs developed to identify changing range, densities, and health of subsistence food species, and to increase existing monitoring of fish and animal health for emerging pathogens and introduction of new species to ensure food safety and sustainability.

Targets:

Possible Targets by 2012:

- Two villages successfully relocated
- Measurable improvements in rural community emergency response services
- Community-based reporting mechanism to document on-the-ground changes in subsistence foods (with an online database element and links to all fish, game, and marine mammal management agencies/biologists)
- A mental health support network that engages native elders

Timing:

2010:

- Create Office of Climate Change Coordination
- Coordinate with federal office of energy coordination.

- Develop process for prioritizing climate impact communities.
- Implement flexible responses to subsistence proposals.

2011:

- Create mandate for relocation assistance.
- Designate lead agencies at state and federal levels.
- Develop project management strategies.
- Develop and integrate funding sources.
- Streamline NEPA process.

Participants/Parties Involved: The partial list below represents parties that do or will play some role in relocation efforts, emergency response, and traditional foods and traditional knowledge networks.

Relocation

Native Organizations:

- Native Village Traditional Councils
- Native Corporations
- Other formal and informal village or Native networks

State of Alaska:

- Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED), Division of Community & Regional Affairs (DCRA) – *group coordinator*
- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)/Village Safe Water Program (VSW)
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF)
- Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMV)/Division of Homeland Security and
- Emergency Management (DHS&EM)
- Alaska Department of Natural resources (DNR), Division of Coastal and Ocean Resources (DCOM)
- Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
- Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA)/Alaska Energy Authority (AEA)
- Alaska State Emergency Response Commission
- Alaska Municipal League
- Alaska Governor's Office

Federal:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Alaska District
- U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (USDA-RD)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Indian Reservations Road Program
- U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Denali Commission
- Offices of Senators Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich

Regional Organizations:

- Association of Village Council Presidents Regional Housing Authority (AVCP)
- Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF)
- Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD)
- Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP)
- Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC)

Emergency response

- Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Division of Emergency Services
- DHS-FEMA
- DHS- U.S. Coast Guard Search and Rescue
- Local Emergency Planning Committees

Traditional foods and traditional knowledge networks

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Federal Subsistence Management Program
- Federal Subsistence Board and Regional Advisory Councils
- Marine Mammal Commission
- International Whaling Commission?
- ADF&G Boards of Fish, Game, and the Division of Subsistence

Evaluation: Under Development**Research and Data Needs:**

- Standardized ADF&G Harvest Surveys (which include considerable social, demographic, and economic information in addition to household harvest per species) need to be accomplished in each of the areas designated with emergency status.
- Standardized social network research needs to be accomplished in select communities to understand potential impacts of relocation on social, sharing, economic, and subsistence networks.
- Regional economic models to quantify climate change impacts on communities and provide input to the NEPA process.
- Regional assessments of existing social service infrastructure, staffing, budgets, and delivery need to be accomplished at regional levels as baseline to plan for increased demand.
- Social impact assessments need to be conducted at regional and community level to provide information for the NEPA process.
- Detailed interviews and oral histories need to be conducted to provide narrative information needed to assess the impacts of climate change and the potential impacts of different forms of relocation.

Implementation Mechanisms

Approval by the AAG and analysis by the Subcabinet with respect to funding, possible legislation, and communication and coordination with federal entities.

Related Policies/Programs and Resources

Related Policies and Programs: *Under Development*

Available Resources: *Under Development*

Feasibility

Feasibility: *Under Development*

Constraints: *Under Development*

Adaptation Benefits and Costs

The coordinated delivery of services to rural communities supports literally every one of the TWG objectives. Currently an array of state, federal, and regional entities are responsible for delivering services to rural Alaskan villages, but specific program policies and regulatory constraints cause conflicting directives, resulting in bottlenecks in the ability to achieve a coordinated delivery of vital services and outcomes that will enable villages and traditional culture to adapt to climate change. The advent of a state coordination office will help mitigate a number of health and cultural threats caused by climate change that are now being experienced by rural communities. For example, an integrated and coherent relocation process will:

- Decrease health risks from poor sanitation.
- Preserve community integrity and provide a basis for ongoing subsistence practices and traditional ways of knowing.
- By preserving existing cultural networks, help communities adapt to substantial changes in wildlife and habitat.

- Lessen potentially adverse impacts on youth, by preserving opportunities to participate in traditional subsistence pursuits.
- Decrease the negative social, psychological and physical impacts associated with community dissolution.

Success in this policy option will be easily measured when a fully functioning Office of Climate Change Coordination is up and running. Numerous benefits will accrue to each agency at the federal and state levels as they reduce their transaction costs (e.g., agency meetings) in attempting to deliver services and relief to impacted communities. A rationalized funding process will reduce cost overruns, minimize waste and duplication, and provide the community with a blue print of reasonable expectations. Processes of collaborative learning and adaptive management will allow for easy quantification of benefits over a period of decades.

Costs:

The costs of the proposed Office of Climate Change Coordination may run into a million dollars. This factors in personnel costs of four new regional coordinators, support staff, travel, office rental and so forth. Savings may accrue depending upon whether the new office is housed within an existent department, e.g., Division of Community & Regional Affairs, or in a newly established division. In contrast during the next decade, the savings from efficient implementation may run several million dollars per annum.

Taking a broader view, the successful implementation of this office is expected to result in significant avoided costs in the millions of dollars over the next 40-50 years, by facilitating cost-efficient community relocation, as opposed to resorting to repeated short-term and temporary measures to shore up communities against erosion, and by coordinating annual response efforts to floods and other climate-related impacts.

Ancillary Benefits and Costs:

Considerable ancillary benefits accrue across all functions of government as improved communication and coordination reduce transaction costs, improve reaction time, and streamline government response to issues and problems that may not be related to climate change. In addition, the same administrative structure put forth in this option can be utilized across a broad range of government mitigation initiatives including coordinating the many options for renewable energy, options that contain numerous costs and benefits, and options that require considerable coordination in the generation, storage, and transmission of this power.

TWG Approval and Deliberations

The concept of an Ombudsman Office grew out of discussions among TWG members that emphasized the clear need for a centralized agency to support rural communities in navigating the bureaucratic requirements of multiple state and federal agencies in addressing community-wide crises linked to climate change. The need was borne out of recent and ongoing experiences of several villages that are currently in peril. There was nearly unanimous support among TWG members for a central agency to serve as an advocate for communities and to spearhead infrastructure reinforcement, emergency response, and relocation efforts.

Beyond these immediate challenges, the TWG saw an opportunity for the Ombudsman Office to embrace a broader range of objectives to support rural communities, including assessing the adaptive capacity of communities; increasing the level of communication between communities

and state and federal agencies by holding community forums with elders; utilizing traditional knowledge to provide feedback to regulatory agencies and scientists (via a citizen-based reporting system) on changes to subsistence resources and on-the-ground climate observations; and increasing the communication of information in native languages and in that are specific and useful to the needs of rural communities. These particular issues are viewed as central to the TWG's mission of developing adaptation measures that address the broad range impacts of climate change on Alaska's indigenous people.



HC2: Surveillance and Control

Option Description

The Issue: Climate change is being linked to increases in the geographic range and incidence of certain infectious and non-infectious diseases, new problems in sanitation and solid waste management, and contaminant exposures in Alaska and elsewhere around the globe.

Overview: This option concerns the observed and projected increase in diseases in Alaska due to global climate change. Current programs are insufficient to identify and control these changes. Existing infrastructure needs to be augmented to address these emerging concerns to develop new methodologies for surveillance and reporting of human and animal diseases.

Objective: The objective of this option is to protect the health of humans and animals, both domestic and wildlife, from the effects of climate change in Alaska through surveillance and control. Public health surveillance is the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data essential to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public health practice. Improving surveillance will allow more robust tracking and identification of trends in order to expeditiously and effectively respond to and control emerging public health threats.

The Need: There is a growing scientific consensus that climate change has affected the distribution, including incidence and geographic range, of infectious and non-infectious diseases globally. Surveillance and control are necessary because they are the mechanisms by which public health practitioners prevent, prepare for, and respond to disease threats. Examples of human diseases that have already been or might soon be linked to climate change in Alaska include asthma, botulism, echinococcosis, giardiasis, paralytic shellfish poisoning, rabies, tick-borne encephalitis, venomous insect events, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* gastroenteritis, and West Nile virus infection. Examples of animal diseases that have already been or might soon be linked to climate change in Alaska include leptospirosis; parasitic infestations in caribou, muskoxen and moose; toxoplasmosis in sea otters; tularemia; and winter tick infestation in moose.

Option Design

Structure: The state of Alaska agencies currently tasked with the responsibility for surveillance and control for human and animal diseases are the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The recommendations presented in this option will require augmentation of existing surveillance and control efforts performed by programs within these agencies. Implementation of the option recommendations will require increased human and material resources, including methods and tools within existing programs, as well as new and augmented partnerships with the public and private sectors, including memoranda of understanding to collect the necessary data.

Targets:

1. Improve surveillance for vectors and vectorborne diseases in vectors
 - a. Expand wild/domestic animal sampling (e.g., equine, rodent, ruminants, beavers, hares)
 - i. Sampling costs--\$20k/yr
 - b. Expand vectorborne disease vector surveillance

- i. Hire 1.0 FTE entomologist--\$150k/yr
 - ii. Hire 0.5 FTE administrative clerk--\$50k/yr
 - iii. Hire 1.0 FTE technical assistant--\$85k/yr
 - iv. Monetary support for travel, lease space costs, and supplies (e.g., traps, microscopes, preservatives and containers, sampling kits, IT resources, postage and shipping costs, etc)--\$75k
2. Expand and improve DHSS's hospital discharge and emergency room databases to improve detection of climate change-related diseases
 - a. 0.5 FTE data analyst--\$60k/yr
 - b. 0.5 FTE project manager--\$65k/yr
 - c. Contractual services for data clearinghouse work--\$80k/yr
3. Improve health care provider education around infectious disease reporting--\$15k/yr
 - a. Health aide conference lectures
 - b. Public health nursing conference lectures
 - c. Grand rounds in hospitals
 - d. Zoonotic disease lectures at Veterinary Association meetings
 - e. Develop a web-based medium for distribution of climate change-related information
4. Create a reporting system for sanitation/wastewater integrity disruptions within DEC
 - a. Create a reporting system database
 - i. 0.25 FTE data analyst--\$30k/yr
 - b. Educate around reporting requirements
 - c. Create a community-based monitoring and reporting program in rural and subsistence communities
5. Improve interagency notification of drinking water and wastewater violations between MOA, DHSS, DEC
 - a. Establish a notification MOU between agencies
6. Increase monitoring in humans and animals for contaminants that are potentially related to climate change (e.g., mercury and persistent organic pollutants) that adversely impact human and animal health.
 - a. 1.0 FTE Public Health Specialist I--\$90k/yr
 - b. Laboratory analysis costs for human biomonitoring--\$150k/yr
 - c. Laboratory analysis costs for animal biomonitoring--\$100k/yr
 - d. Establish an MOU whereby federal agencies would agree to collaborate with state and local government officials in the collection and analysis of contaminant/irritant samples.
7. Provide surveillance and control program updates to stakeholders through a variety of means
 - a. Epidemiology Bulletins
 - b. Alaska Forum on the Environment talks
 - c. Office of the State Veterinarian Quarterly Newsletter
 - d. Other

Timing: For each of the above targets, we recommend that they be implemented as soon as possible to establish baseline data and discontinued only if it is determined that the solution is no longer necessary during the evaluation process.

Participants/Parties Involved: ADHSS, ADEC, ADFG, ADNDR, MOA, ANTHC, AML, Alaska Hospitals and Emergency Departments, USDA, CDC, DOI, NOAA, EPA

Evaluation: For each of the above solutions, we recommend ongoing monitoring and evaluation, with annual assessments regarding the need to continue the effort. A variety of evaluation mechanisms could be used, including the distribution of periodic survey forms to stakeholder agencies, including communities participating in surveillance efforts. Finally, the efforts could undergo evaluation by an outside consultant to enable continuous improvement.

Research and Data Needs: Sufficient evidence exists that implementation of this policy option will provide the intended benefits—namely, surveillance data for detection of disease and sanitation/wastewater violations. This information is critical for determining targeted public health control needs.

Implementation Mechanisms

See prior sections. Hardware, software, and personnel needs, as discussed above, are minimal but essential for implementation and management of the presented targets.

Related Policies and Programs

1. Environmental Public Health Program, DHSS
2. Infectious Disease Program, DHSS
3. Office of the State Veterinarian Program, DEC
4. Drinking Water Program, DEC
5. Wastewater Program, DEC
6. Solid Waste Program, DEC
7. Wildlife Conservation Program, DFG
8. Reportable conditions policies, DHSS, DEC

Available Resources:

1. Existing public health and animal health infrastructure
2. Other resources, as discussed above

Feasibility

We feel that each of the solutions listed above is highly feasible as no new legislative authority is needed and the basic governmental structure already exists for implementation with minimal cost in terms of capital infrastructure and personnel services support.

Constraints: Need for long-term funding.

Adaptation Benefits and Costs

- Estimates of the proposed surveillance and control financial costs are indicated in the Target section above.
- Health benefits include
 - Identification and prevention of climate change-related infectious and non-infectious diseases among humans and animals, and
 - Prevention of health consequences associated with contaminant exposures and water/sanitation disruptions
- Financial benefits include

- Averted costs of human and animal health care associated with climate change-related diseases
- Averted costs to state government for human and animal outbreak response
 - Outbreak response can be very costly in terms of personnel time, travel, laboratory resources, supplies, etc.
- Averted costs to industry from aftermath of outbreaks
 - e.g., the outbreak of *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* gastroenteritis in Alaska in 2004 severely threatened the oyster industry in Alaska; a similar incident could involve other fish species (salmon), or mammal such as moose or reindeer.

TWG Approval and Deliberations

HC3. COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPACT EVALUATION INITIATIVE

Actions taken to mitigation greenhouse gas emissions or to adapt to the current and projected impacts of climate change also may benefit or harm human health. This option proposes a Community Health Impact Evaluation (CHIE) initiative to rapidly and efficiently screen proposed mitigation and adaptation activities to determine whether there may be associated health benefits or harms and to identify additional actions to maximize the benefits and reduce potential adverse impacts.

Option Description

The Issue: Mitigation and adaptation activities implemented in a wide variety of sectors can affect human health, from building new physical infrastructure, such as protective seawalls, to a review of historical burial site records. These auxiliary health effects are generally unintended, and can range from none to highly significant. At present, there is no established mechanism for a brief, structured, and rapid professional evaluation of a proposed mitigation or adaptation measure to identify potential adverse or positive influences on health. This option would create such a mechanism to identify where health effects were unlikely, minor, few, or more significant. Such an evaluation would facilitate the design and implementation of necessary additional measures, including monitoring, to maximize benefits and to reduce potential likely and significant adverse effects.

Objective: The objective of this policy is to create a Community Health Impact Evaluation initiative to rapidly and efficiently screen proposed mitigation and adaptation measures to identify health benefits and harms, and to identify activities to maximize the benefits and reduce potential harms.

Option Design

Structure/design: The CHIE would require a designated Project Review Committee (PRC) with primary responsibility for examination and evaluation of each mitigation and adaptation measure recommended for implementation. To optimize efficiency and ensure rapid response, the PRC would have a core team that includes the State Department of Public Health, representatives from relevant State agencies, and public health professionals from other organizations. Implementing this option would not require the hiring of new professional staff, but would need part-time staff support.

The PRC would follow these steps:

1. The State agency responsible for the mitigation or adaptation measure would forward a request to the PRC chair for an evaluation, along with a full description of the measure.
2. The PRC Chair would convene the core PRC members, with at least one representative from the responsible State agency. The proposed measure would be reviewed by the PRC to determine the possible need for an in-depth review. A detailed evaluation would be recommended if (1) multiple likely mechanisms for adverse health effects were identified, (2) one mechanism was identified with a high likelihood of adverse effect, or (3) the initial evaluation suggested that there was likely to be a public perception of possible adverse effects.

3. If the PRC evaluation concluded that there was a negligible likelihood for any adverse health effect, a report from the PRC would be issued to the responsible State agency. TARGET—one working week.
4. If the PRC decided an in-depth evaluation was advisable, an appropriate group of additional consultants, agency personnel, and citizen members would be convened, and the following steps taken:
 - a. The PRC Chair would send an interim report to the responsible State agency recommending an in-depth evaluation and listing the reasons that justify the recommendation. TARGET - 2 working weeks.
 - b. The PRC Chair would convene the expanded committee and:
 - i. Ascertain the possible pathways or mechanisms of potential adverse effects or benefits.
 - ii. Assure all needed additional State, federal, municipal and other citizen groups possibly affected by the identified mechanisms were represented. This group would identify all aspects of effect mechanisms, positive and adverse, and suggests measures to mitigate adverse effects and maximize benefits.
 - iii. Align measures designed to minimize adverse impacts, and measures designed to maximize benefits, with outcome monitoring indicators to create the most efficient monitoring strategy.
 - iv. Submit a final report to the requesting State agency. TARGET--4-6 working weeks.

Timing: Implementation of the CHIE option would require authorizing legislation or regulations before the first mitigation and adaptation option is implemented.

Participants/Parties involved: The PRC needs to be the responsibility of the State Department of Public Health, with participation from community and environmental health professionals from other agencies and organizations. The expanded PRC required for an in-depth review would reflect the needs of the specific mitigation and adaptation option.

Evaluation: A variety of mechanisms for PRC evaluation could be used. The simplest could consist of regular feed back forms used by the PRC Chair to elicit evaluation comments from the participants and agencies involved in each review. In addition, regular feedback and critique could be solicited from involved agencies over the life of a mitigation or adaptation project, as well as residents at whom the option was directed. Monitoring reports should be maintained over the life of the project, to fine-tune the option as needed, and to provide information to affected communities that might be useful for planning additional adaptation/mitigation strategies. Periodically, the PRC should undergo evaluation by an outside consultant to enable continuous improvement. Ideally, the reports, and monitoring reports, as well as all evaluation reports should be available to the public on a user-friendly website.

Research and Data Needs: The CHIE Option is based on existing models of assessing the impacts of policies and measures on community health, including those used by the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, and does not require further research. It is a well-established, widely used public health protection mechanism.

Implementation Mechanisms

The CHIE Option would require at least authorizing regulations. Existing personnel in the Department of Public Health could probably meet the professional needs, but part-time support staff would be needed. It is anticipated that the number of mitigation and adaptation options selected by the State will not be large enough at any one time to make additional full-time professional staff a requirement.

Related Policies/Programs and Resources

Related Policies and Programs: No programs currently address this issue.

Available Resources:

Feasibility

Adaptation Benefits and Costs

TWG Approval and Deliberations

All TWG members agree that implementing this adaptation option is critical to increase Alaska's capacity to avoid, prepare for, and effectively respond to the health and culture risks of climate change.

HC4: Sanitation

Option Description

The Issue: Increases in global temperatures have led to new and exacerbated existing problems in sanitation and solid waste management that are anticipated to negatively impact the health of communities.

Overview: Sanitation and solid waste management is intended to prevent the outbreak of waterborne, vector-borne, and hygienic diseases, limit environmental toxic exposure to humans and wildlife, and improve quality-of-life. Facility and program performance design is based on historical environmental factors. However, these design factors are shifting due to climate change. This option is intended to adapt program and facility design so that public health continues to be adequately addressed in the face of current and anticipated environmental changes. Current rural sanitation policies are insufficient to address these changes, and need to be modified.

Objective: The objective of this option is to protect the health of humans and wildlife from the effect of climate change in Alaska by improving the capacity of the rural sanitation and solid waste management systems to respond to and/or control anticipated new and exacerbated disease and toxic exposures. The goal is to prevent or at least ameliorate acute and chronic health problems in the population.

The Need: There is a growing scientific consensus that climate change has affected the distribution, including incidence and geographic range, of infectious and non-infectious diseases that sanitation systems are intended to minimize. Additionally, changes in water quality, such as acidification and temperature that can affect human and wildlife toxic exposures are occurring in Alaska. Changes in drinking water supply (both quality and quantity) and location may occur with the changing hydrology regime. Permafrost, utilized in some cases as a waste liner for sewage lagoons and solid waste facilities, and riverbanks that support treatment cells and infrastructure are eroding. Additionally, permafrost lader soils, in some cases, serve as structural elements in the foundation of water storage tanks, buildings that are part of the community sanitation infrastructure and/or earthen berms that may contain fresh water for drinking or coral effluent from a sewage collection system. These phenomena are a concern as rural sanitation differs from urban and semi-rural facilities in that:

- 1) Solid waste and wastewater treatment and retention largely relies on earthen structures, unlined natural land cells, simpler water supply and treatment systems, inadequate logistical opportunity for waste compaction, cover, and consolidation that make toxin and pathogen removal/barrier performance susceptible to physical environmental changes.
- 2) A high proximity of facilities to housing, drinking water sources, and a local diet of aquatic species is present creating conditions amenable to water, vector, and hygienic disease spread, and
- 3) Economies-of-scale present extreme Operation and Maintenance (O&M) costs so that impacts from climate change threaten to exceed the tipping point of community ability to pay.

Option Design

Structure: The agencies currently tasked with the responsibility for rural sanitation and solid waste management include the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Regional Tribal Health Organizations, local Environmental

Programs, US Department of Agriculture, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Alaska Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife are indirectly involved in identification and control for human and aquatic life negative health outcomes that may emanate from inadequate system performance.

The recommendations presented in this option will require augmentation of existing sanitation and waste management or human and aquatic life health efforts performed by programs within these agencies. Implementation of the option recommendations will require increased human and material resources, including methods and tools, within existing programs, as well as new and augmented partnerships with the public and private sectors. Additionally, these recommendations will require an update of existing environmental data sets (temperature and climate projections) in order that facilities can be constructed and/or renovated to meet future changed environmental conditions.

Targets:

1. Provide a portion of distressed community O&M costs in order to adequately protect system investment, via annuity or other mechanism. Non-traditional approaches such as the Alaska Rural Utilities Collaborative may be considered for more wide spread utilization.
2. Collaborate with statewide sanitation and environmental health entities currently conducting infrastructure inspections to design inspection/evaluation protocols addressing severity, nature, and timing of climate change impacts.
3. Review existing Class III solid waste management guidelines (for rural and remote, non-hub communities) to adapt the regulations, recommendations, and community outreach to anticipate continued climate change impacts. For example:
 - a. Design allowances such as permafrost loss and inability to rely on permafrost as a satisfactory liner
 - b. Alternative or supplemental systems such as composting, hazardous waste storage facilities
 - c. System design or operations for erosion, or flooding – such as leachate retention ponds
 - d. Design amenable to anticipated relocation (move back from eroding river or move community) such as sack-fill/road mat system that may be used to move entire landfill using local resources
 - e. Minimum distance to housing and drinking water sources to allow for increased rodent, insect disease vector populations at disposal site
 - f. Open burning in covered containers to keep out increased precipitation, decreasing smoke toxicity
4. Review the State of Alaska Capital Improvement Project (CIP) list for solid waste projects and priority classifications in relation to substantial and relevant climate change issues

- 5 Make available financial resources or incentives for development of more efficient and lower-cost systems, (e.g. Alaska-based manufacturing of road mats, modular treatment systems)
- 6 Establish an MOU between agencies related to responsibilities.
- 7 Assure to the extent possible that existing sanitation facilities are protected against system failure due to climatic events such as flooding, wind, erosion, permafrost melt, etc.
- 8 Plans and designs for new sanitation facilities account for potential future climate changes that could damage or destroy these facilities

Timing: For each of the above targets, we recommend that they be implemented as soon as possible to establish protection-adaptive systems in the communities where resources are being allocated in the near-term. Without timely implementation, wastage of capital resources is risked as system lifespan horizons are designed for 20 -40 years. Human and aquatic life health may suffer both acute and chronic effects as well as reduced quality of life.

Participants/Parties Involved: ADEC, ANTHC, USDA, EPA, AML, Regional Tribal Health Organizations,

Evaluation: For each of the above solutions, we recommend annual assessments regarding the need to continue or modify the effort.

Research and Data Needs: Sufficient evidence exists that implementation of this policy option will provide the intended benefits—namely, modification of rural sanitation and waste management to meet health and quality-of-life performance goals in the face of anticipated environmental impacts will meet the intent of public health infrastructure in rural communities.

Helpful research needs for implementation:

- Use of Geo-tubes for waste or wastewater cells
- Economics of Supersack and road mat manufacture in Alaska
- Increased acidification in streams – increased mobilization and bioavailability of toxics impact on NPDES, ash settlement of open burning, leachate
- Engineering design parameters based on anticipated climate changes including temperature, precipitation, wind, sea level rise, etc.

Implementation Mechanisms

Key agencies and entities form a task force to identify and implement responsibilities and activities

Related Policies/Programs and Resources

Related Policies and Programs: ANTHC and VSW sanitation programs, Regional Tribal Health Organizations environmental health programs

Feasibility

We feel that each of the solutions listed above is highly feasible as no new legislative authority is needed and the basic governmental structure already exists for implementation. If systems are

adapted to climate change, capital costs are not likely to increase dramatically. However, if systems need to be retrofitted or repaired due to future climate change, the economic impact could be substantial. Some cost increases may be anticipated in communities where systems must be located further from town than previously, for systems with no alternative than supporting a higher protective level (e.g. a treatment cell liner), or for alternative systems (e.g. increased filter efficiencies, reverse osmosis, road mats in place of gravel roads). However, initial increase in costs in switching to targeted adaptive policies will decrease over time as these methods become conventional and design and production costs lower.

Adaptation Benefits and Costs

Benefits (positive or beneficial effects)

Overall priority: This option priority is high as failure of sanitation systems is potentially catastrophic to public health and resource-intensive and often logistically complex to address after the fact, whereas addressing in a timely proactive manner will be protective of health and require significantly less resources.

Benefits produced/metrics: Number of homes with adequate and protected drinking water, number of homes with indoor plumbing, number of communities meeting National Safe Drinking Water Act, number of communities meeting National Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, number of cases of communicable diseases, number of potentially emerging vector infestations (e.g. Norway Rat)

Program Success: Program success would be defined as no catastrophic system failures, no disease outbreaks or negative health outcomes due to inadequate protective features resulting from climate change impacts.

Time frame over which the option will produce benefits: Benefits continue over decades

Considerations in producing benefits: Adequate and timely funding for effective systems, incorporation of operation and maintenance needs, community buy-in may all lead to improved public health

Unknowns: Number of communities affected and what each community might require, optimal system treatment for changed water quality and/or quantity.

Costs (financial requirements or negative effects)

Overall Cost: This option carries a relatively small cost compared to cost of pursuing a “no action” alternative. The provision of adequate supplies of water for both drinking and hygienic practices has been shown to reduce health care costs.

Actions/activities associated with costs: Reviewing regulations, legislation, assessment, building, training

Programmatic costs involved: Capital costs, O&M costs, labor, equipment, fuel, technology, design & manufacturing incentive program

Cost components of other activities: Overall Low. Assessment of this option can largely be performed with existing resources and entities, system feasibility studies are already performed and only incremental cost would be associated with adding climate change considerations for

system. Costs for new and innovative approaches or locating an in-state manufacturer can largely be borne by private sector with sufficient promise of use and/or an incentive program.

Cost components of taking adaptive action: Upgrading/adapting/relocating infrastructure, identifying best system option

Financed by: Primarily state and federal sector, and carried out by ANTHC, VSW or private contractors. Secondarily private sector may incur some or all costs associated with research and development of improvements and innovations with market potential. If this option is performed with foresight and adequate funding, any additional costs incurred above current infrastructure funding are anticipated to primarily temporary; with exception of anticipated need for permanent source of funding available to distressed communities to cover a portion of O&M costs.

Factors/circumstances affecting costs: Number of communities affected and what each community might require, optimal system treatment for changed water quality

Unknowns: Number of communities affected and what each community might require, optimal system treatment for changed water quality or quantity.

Ancillary Benefits and Costs: This option will protect community drinking water, supply some communities with improved drinking water quality, increase substantially the number of communities with safe solid waste systems, protect source water for drinking and subsistence uses, protect aquatic species of commercial, subsistence and conservation interest, reduce substantially exposures to toxic contaminants, increase urban-based jobs via potential for local manufacturing of adaptive system components and/or incremental increased resources required for option implementation, increase in rural-based jobs via subsidy of O&M.

Data Sources

Documentation of data sources used for estimates—or sources of information that could be used for a cost/benefit analysis (since may be beyond scope of the TWG)

- USACE Village Erosion Report
- USACE Evaluation of Supersacks for Erosion Control
- DOT evaluation report on road mats
- Community case studies using supersacks for waste disposal and road mats for roads/landfill roads
- ANTHC and VSW data and studies on existing systems (can be cross-indexed with USACE erosion study)
- Regional health corporation inspection reports
- ANTHC and VSW design and construction estimates

TWG Approval and Deliberations

HC5: Effects on Archaeological, Historical, and Cemetery Sites

The State, in partnership with tribes and other stakeholders and through augmentation of existing infrastructure, should coordinate the inventory, assessment and prioritization of cemetery, archaeological, and historic sites to develop mitigation strategies for threats due to climate change.

Option Description

The Issue: Alaska’s gravesites, archaeological sites, and historic sites are becoming increasingly exposed and impacted through anthropogenic and natural processes, including global climate change. Coastal sites are particularly vulnerable. The sea level rise projected to occur over the next few decades will alter the shape of coastline and speed erosion, submerging or destroying many graves and cultural sites. Inland, warming temperatures have led to the melting of ice fields thousands of years old, exposing organic artifacts such as arrows to the elements. Warming temperatures are also causing lake and stream levels to become higher or lower than normal, exposing or inundating sites. In some areas, the onslaught of the bark beetle has had an effect on sites and structures.

Overview: This option addresses the observed and projected increase in the destruction of gravesites, archaeological sites, and historic sites due to the effects of global climate change. Programs within the state have the authorities, infrastructure, and expertise to coordinate identification, assessment and mitigation of adverse effects to these resources, but do not have adequate staff or funding to perform the duties. Appropriate responses to these challenges require augmentation to existing infrastructure.

Objective: The objective of this option is to identify, assess, prioritize, and mitigate adverse effects of climate change on gravesites, archaeological sites, and historic sites through the development of dedicated program areas within existing state authorities. This will provide for the coordination of efforts to identify, assess, prioritize, and develop mitigation plans to address the effects of climate change, and will enable the State to rapidly respond to threats as necessary.

The Need: There is strong scientific support for a relationship between global climate change and the environmental changes that are causing the destruction of gravesites, archaeological sites, and historic sites. The collection of baseline data and monitoring efforts are required to identify, assess and prioritize threatened sites, and develop plans for mitigating these threats. Examples of cemeteries and cultural sites that have been wholly or partially destroyed by changing weather patterns are widespread throughout Alaska.

Option Design

Structure: The state agency tasked with preservation and protection of archaeological and historical sites on state lands, including tidelands and submerged lands, is the Office of History and Archaeology (OHA). Housed within the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, OHA carries out the policy of the state to “preserve and protect the historic, prehistoric, and archeological resources of Alaska from loss, desecration, and destruction so that the scientific, historic, and cultural heritage embodied in these resources may pass undiminished to future generations...” (AS 41.35.10). OHA also fulfills the responsibilities of the State Historic Preservation Office, a federally funded program that carries out the mandates of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (*16 U.S.C. 470*) for a wide range of

historic preservation activities, including maintenance of the official restricted-access statewide inventory of archaeological and historic sites. With regard to gravesites and human remains, OHA has provided forensic anthropology consultation to the State Medical Examiner under reimbursable services agreements since 1988. In 2004, OHA initiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Medical Examiner and Alaska State Troopers that provides interagency guidance on the discovery and treatment of human remains.

With the ability to work across agency lines, staff expertise in the related fields, and a history of collaborations with tribes and other organizations, OHA is the best candidate for coordinating and facilitating the activities described under this option. While OHA has the authorities and infrastructure to begin assessing the effects of climate on the state's archaeological and historic sites, including gravesites, it does not currently have the staff or funding to carry out these duties. Implementation of this option will require increased human and material resources within this existing program, as well as new and augmented partnerships with other agencies, local governments, tribes, and organizations such as historical societies.

Targets:

1. Establish a new program area within OHA, with a dedicated archaeologist / anthropologist position and funding for travel and equipment to coordinate and facilitate cemetery issues. Duties would include coordination of studies to assess the effects of climate change and providing technical advice. Modeled somewhat after a successful program in Wisconsin, the proposed “Alaska Burial Sites Preservation Program” would coordinate closely with the Alaska State Troopers, the Alaska State Medical Examiners Office, tribes, and other stakeholders. The position should be supplemented as necessary to carry out specific program activities through the use of paid college interns or non-permanent state positions. The position would serve as OHA liaison with law enforcement agencies, the State Medical Examiner's Office, and the Bureau of Vital Statistics (for burial transit permits and disinterment / re-interment permits). The position would also facilitate communication with tribal representatives on matters involving human remains. As a part of program development, the position would:
 - a. Help to establish the “Alaska Burial Sites Preservation Advisory Board” comprised of the State Archaeologist (nonvoting facilitator), program archaeologist, tribal members, scientists, university faculty, and other stakeholders. The Board will provide guidance and oversight to the “Alaska Burial Sites Preservation Program.”
 - b. Coordinate and facilitate field surveys, interviews, and records searches to identify, inventory, and determine the condition of cemetery and gravesites. Assess threats by erosion and quantify changes by measuring rates of erosion through time.
 - c. Develop a dedicated restricted-access database for reported cemetery / gravesites and discovered human remains. This can best be accomplished by designing a supplemental GIS-compatible module to the AHRS database, which is under ongoing development by the state's DNR LRIS/GIS Section. The cemetery database would be the primary tool for identifying, managing and monitoring changes to gravesites. By implementing a map interface, it would also serve as an important tool for law enforcement agencies and the State Medical Examiner's Office by allowing a visual comparison between human remains discovery sites and known grave locations.

- d. In consultation with the “Alaska Burial Sites Preservation Advisory Board” and landowners, prioritize cemetery / gravesites based on level of threat, feasibility to relocate or mitigate, and importance to stakeholders such as tribes and local organizations.
 - e. Help develop mitigation plans (such as relocation); seek supplemental funding opportunities and partnerships with tribes, other agencies, universities, non-profits, and other stakeholders for survey or to carry out mitigation projects;
 - f. Coordinate with other OHA program areas to develop a public education program with site stewardship and monitoring components. This should be done in collaboration with other organizations when possible. This will give local community members an active role in monitoring sites for changes due to climate or disturbance, and will provide baseline information to the state.
2. Establish a new program area within OHA, with a dedicated archaeologist position and funding for travel and equipment, to coordinate and facilitate studies for addressing the effects of climate change on Alaska’s archaeological and historic sites.
 - a. In collaboration with tribes, other agencies, and local organizations, this position will help to coordinate and facilitate field surveys, interviews, and records searches to identify and inventory threatened cultural resource sites. The position should be supplemented as necessary to carry out program activities through the use of paid college interns or non-permanent state positions.
 - b. Enter or update site records in the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) database, the state’s official statewide inventory of archaeological and historic sites. The AHRS is the primary management tool for preservation planning under state and federal laws. Data fields in the AHRS record observations on current condition and provides baseline information for assessing changes to sites through time.
 - c. Prioritize sites based on level of threat, feasibility to mitigate, and importance to stakeholders such as tribes and local organizations.
 - d. Help develop mitigation plans (such as data recovery) for threatened sites; seek supplemental funding opportunities and partnerships with tribes, other agencies, universities, non-profits, and other stakeholders for survey and mitigation efforts.
 - e. Carry out a public education program with site stewardship and monitoring components. This should be done in collaboration with other organizations when possible. This will give local community members an active role in monitoring sites for changes due to climate or disturbance, and will help provide baseline information on changes for inclusion in the AHRS inventory.
 3. Enact legislation to create a property tax benefit for private landowners who actively protect listed cemeteries / gravesites and archaeological or historical sites on their land.

Timing:

Targets 1 and 2 (establishment of program areas within DNR/OHA) should be implemented as soon as possible. The intent of these targets is to identify and prioritize cemeteries and sites for mitigation, in consultation with tribes and other stakeholders, before the onset of crisis mode. The need already exists, as affirmed by increasing reports of damage from erosion and other

effects of climate change. It is anticipated that after the “coordinating archaeologist” positions are filled, it will take around 6 months to create and appoint members to a burial sites advisory board, begin working with other agencies to develop agreement documents such as MOUs for interagency cooperation, begin meeting with key stakeholders in coastal areas, refine the framework for program areas, and establish a timeline for meeting specific goals. Within one year, it is expected that program infrastructures will be established and tested, and that the realization of direct benefits will have begun. Target 3, which would only help protect cemeteries/sites on private lands, is not as time critical. The Target 3 benefits would be long-term and cumulative, but less profound.

Participants/Parties Involved:

- ✓ DNR/DPOR Office of History and Archaeology (OHA): OHA has state and federal authorities and infrastructure for addressing a broad range of cultural resource issues, and is the logical agency to incorporate the Target 1-2 program areas. OHA has the ability to work across agency lines, staff expertise in related fields, and a history of collaborations with tribes, agencies, and other organizations. OHA, along with the Alaska State Troopers and the State Medical Examiner, has already signed a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes protocols for the treatment and investigation of ancient human remains.
- ✓ Tribal Organizations: Tribal organizations will be represented on the Alaska Burial Sites Preservation Advisory Board, and will be consulted during the identification, prioritization, and mitigation planning for eroding cemeteries and archaeological sites.
- ✓ DHHS / Public Health / Office of the State Medical Examiner (SME): The SME, with jurisdiction over human remains, will be consulted under Target 1 (cemetery issues) as appropriate. The DNR position created under Target 1 will serve as liaison with the SME.
- ✓ DHHS / Public Health / Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS): BVS issues permits for the relocation of burials (i.e., Burial Transit Permits, Disinterment - Re-interment Permits). The BVS will be consulted under Target 1 (cemetery issues) as appropriate. The DNR position created under Target 1 will serve as liaison with the BVS.
- ✓ DPS Alaska State Troopers (AST): The AST, with jurisdiction over criminal investigations, will be consulted under Target 1 (cemetery issues) as appropriate under the existing MOU. The DNR position created under Target 1 will serve as liaison with the AST, and will coordinate both with local posts and with the ABI Missing Persons Bureau.
- ✓ University of Alaska: The various campuses of the University of Alaska support programs and expert staff that can enhance our abilities to understand and address climate change. For example, university programs include anthropologists, ocean scientists, earth scientists, climatologists, and experts in other related fields. The university also trains students who can be employed through internships to help with implementing the described tasks.
- ✓ Federal Agencies: The U.S. National Park Service coordinates actions under the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (43 CFR 10.2.f.1-2). NAGPRA applies to Native American remains located on federally owned, federally controlled, or tribal lands. In Alaska, federally controlled lands include more than 200,000,000 acres of federal lands, as well as federally restricted properties such as Native Allotments. Human remains in museums that are entirely or partially federally funded are also covered under sections of NAGPRA. NPS and

federal land managers are potential consulting parties on NAGPRA issues, along with affected tribes. The DNR position created under Target 1 will serve as liaison with federal agencies on NAGPRA issues.

- ✓ Local Governments: Local governments, including law enforcement jurisdictions and historic preservation commissions, will be consulted as appropriate under Targets 1 and 2. The DNR position created under Target 1 will serve as liaison with local governments.
- ✓ Private Foundations: The DNR positions created under Targets 1-2 potentially will collaborate with tribes and other organizations to solicit grant funds for specific measures (such as cemetery re-location and archaeological data recovery) to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- ✓ Private Corporations: The DNR positions created under Targets 1-2 will coordinate with and solicit assistance from corporate landowners and regional managers to help identify and protect cemeteries and archaeological sites under their oversight (Tasks 1 and 2). Under Task 3 (tax incentive), private corporations potentially could benefit by protecting such sites.

Evaluation:

A measure of the success of Year 1 (implementation) includes the following hallmarks:

- ✓ Create and appoint members to an Alaska Burial Sites Preservation Advisory Board, establish a meeting schedule and operating procedures (Task 1);
- ✓ Develop, through meetings and teleconferences, a comprehensive list of contacts in affected communities, local governments, and partner agencies. Schedule meetings in key communities (Tasks 1-2);
- ✓ Initiation or modification of agreement documents (MOUs, MOAs, Cooperative Agreements, etc.) to enhance cooperation between OHA and other organizations (Tasks 1-2);
- ✓ Establish a database structure for recording baseline information on burial sites (cemeteries, graves, discovered human remains) and evaluating effects of climate change (Task 1);
- ✓ Incorporate the burial sites database structure into the OHA Integrated Business System as a component of the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS). This is dependent on funding for DNR GIS programmers, and will probably extend into subsequent years (Task 1);
- ✓ Establish a database structure for evaluating the effects of climate change on archaeological and historical sites;
- ✓ Establish methods and protocols, in consultation with other scientists, for measuring the effects of climate change on cemeteries and archaeological / historical sites (i.e., cadastral surveys, photo stations, satellite data, NOAA studies, annual measurements of ice field boundaries, etc.) (Tasks 1-2);

A measure of the success of Year 2 and subsequent years includes the following quantitative data:

- ✓ The number of burial sites and archaeological / historical sites added to appropriate modules in the AHRS inventory as a result of investigations under Tasks 1 and 2;

- ✓ The number of updated records for burial sites and archaeological / historical sites in the AHRS inventory as a result of investigations under Tasks 1 and 2;
- ✓ The number of burial sites and archaeological / historical sites evaluated for effects of climate change and prioritized for the development of mitigation plans (Tasks 1-2);
- ✓ The number of burial sites and archaeological / historical sites for which mitigation plans were developed in partnership with other organizations (Tasks 1-2);
- ✓ The number of burial sites and archaeological / historical sites for which mitigation measures were carried out with OHA assistance (i.e., relocation of burials or artifacts, shoreline stabilization, etc.) (Tasks 1-2);
- ✓ The number of field investigations conducted by OHA under Tasks 1 or 2 with or without partners;
- ✓ The number of grants or requests for assistance initiated and/or received for specific mitigation measures.
- ✓ The measures of success should be evaluated within the same framework as other OHA program areas. Direct program oversight will be provided by the Chief of OHA (State Historic Preservation Officer) and State Archaeologist (Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer). In carrying out its duties, OHA is advised by the Alaska Historical Commission (AS 41.35.300-380), comprised of individuals appointed by the Governor and chaired by the Lt. Governor. Course corrections should be initiated if review determines that desired outcomes aren't being met.

Research and Data Needs:

This adaptation options effectively presents a means for coordinating and gathering the data necessary to accomplish the objectives of this policy. No additional research or data needs are anticipated.

Related Policies and Programs:

The State's Office of History and Archaeology (OHA), located within DNR/DPOR, has the infrastructure, expertise, and authority (under AS 41.35) to carry out most of the suggested target activities, but does not have funding or positions for new program areas. Other state agencies with relevant authorities include the Alaska State Troopers (criminal / human remains investigations), the Alaska State Medical Examiner's Office (human remains investigations), the Bureau of Vital Statistics (burial transit and disinterment / re-interment permits), the DNR Division of Ocean and Coastal Management (coastal erosion), and the DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water (management of the state's coastal lands, including tidelands and submerged lands). Federal agencies have management authorities for archaeological resources (36 CFR 800, 16 U.S.Code 470aa-470mm, and others) and human remains (43 CFR 10.2.f.1-2) under their jurisdictions. Some of the major federal landowners include BLM, NPS, USFWS, and USFS. BIA has responsibility for carrying out agency responsibilities for Native trust lands. These agencies employ archaeologists to address site and historic cemetery issues on their lands. Some Native organizations (including regional corporations, village corporations, and heritage organizations) have undertaken intermittent efforts to protect cemeteries and sites on their lands. Most do not have the funds or professional expertise, however, for a formal program or sustained effort. Because the State owns the vast majority of tidelands and active river channels where

erosion is most prevalent, State permits or partnerships will usually be necessary even if work occurs at the local level.

Available Resources:

The State's Office of History and Archaeology (OHA), located within DNR/DPOR, has the infrastructure, expertise, and authorities (under AS 41.35) to carry out most of the suggested target activities. There is no funding mechanism in place for the new program areas and added responsibilities. Conceptually, the two new positions, if implemented, would serve as liaisons with other organizations (tribes, federal agencies, state agencies, non-profits, universities, etc.) to develop plans and cooperative projects, as well as collaborate on grant proposals for specific activities. OHA has the ability to work across agency lines, staff expertise in the related fields, and a history of collaborations with tribes and other organizations.

Feasibility

The solutions listed are highly feasible and can be implemented under existing infrastructure. As the primary owner of tidelands and active river channels in Alaska, as well as other key landforms, the State should take the lead in managing cemeteries and archaeological sites threatened by climate change. This should be done through cooperation and collaboration with other stakeholders.

Benefits and Costs

The creation of two new program areas under Targets 1 and 2, each staffed by a single "coordinator" position assisted by college interns as needed, will produce cost effective benefits. Tasks 1 and 2 can be implemented with confidence that the intended benefits will be provided. Overall authorities and infrastructure already exist within State government. While Tasks 1 and 2 should be regarded as ongoing processes, tangible results are expected to begin accumulating after approximately 6 months of implementation. Task 3 (tax incentive), which has precedent in other states, is expected to yield long-term benefits that may not be provided for several years.

Constraints

Targets 1 and 2 will require funding for staff positions, travel, and emergency response actions to mitigate short-term effects of climate change (for example, deployment of staff to assist a local community with identifying and re-interring burials exposed by a storm). Travel to remote areas can be costly, but is important. Target 3 (property tax benefit) is conceptual, but has been implemented successfully in other states. This target, which will require legislative action, should be further defined in consultation with other state agencies and local governments.

TWG Approval and Deliberations:

The majority of the TWG members agree that implementing this adaptation option is critical to increase Alaska's capacity to avoid, prepare for, and effectively respond to the health and culture risks of climate change. Archaeology and history are nonrenewable resources. This statement made by a TWG member states, "The loss of culture is mourned always in hindsight and recognized as irreplaceable. Here we have a chance to not repeat mistakes of the past by proactively recognizing those tangible aspects that make us Alaskan, make us Native, make us human."