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**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**ALASKA CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION ADVISORY GROUP**  
**Health and Culture Technical Working Group (HC TWG)**  
Meeting #4, 23 July 2008, 8:30 – 10:30 AM

**Attendance:**

1. Technical Working Group members:

Jim Berner, Mike Bradley, Harry Brower, Don Callaway, Jeff Demain, Bob Gerlach, Henry Huntington, Joe McLaughlin, Kristie Ebi, Jason Vogel

2. Public Attendees:

Sally Schlichting, Susan McNeil

**Background documents:**

(posted at [http://www.akclimatechange.us/Health\\_Culture.cfm](http://www.akclimatechange.us/Health_Culture.cfm))

1. Meeting Notice and Agenda
2. Summary of Meeting #3
3. Health and Culture Draft Catalog of State Actions

**Discussion items and key issues:**

1. Kristie Ebi and Jason Vogel called the meeting to order, completed the roll call, and reviewed the agenda and plans for the call.
2. The summary for meeting #3 was approved.
3. Jeff Demain offered a review of the Adaptation Advisory Group (AAG) meeting of July 16<sup>th</sup>. He answered questions from other TWG members about both process and the substance of what was discussed at that meeting.
4. Most of the remaining discussion focused on the Draft Catalog of Policy Options, how the AAG discussions pertained to those options, and specifically Diminishment or Change of Subsistence Diet (HC-13). In addition to the comments submitted by members of the TWG prior to the meeting, the following issues were raised:

- HC-1 Creating a coherent central government agency to help rural communities coordinate with all of the federal and state agencies, NGOs, and other organizations involved in making decisions that affect rural and Native communities. This issue was brought up in comments from TWG members on the 7/9 and 6/26 TWG phone conferences, and prior to the 7/9 phone conference in emailed comments. The AAG also found this issue compelling, and it was further discussed that such a role could be very effective and would likely become one of the Health and Culture (H&C) recommendations to the AAG on the 7/23 call. This office was compared to the role of FEMA and the challenges that entity faced following Hurricane Katrina. It was discussed that this agency/role would unlikely be tackled by other TWGs and may therefore be particularly important to suggest to the AAG.
- Kristie Ebi put the current conversation in context, emphasizing the need to come to closure on a list of policy options, mentioning the idea of using criteria to judge those options and winnow them down to 8-10 priorities for state action, and letting people know that there would be a balloting process based upon the priorities of TWG members.
- Jason Vogel reviewed the discussions from the 7/9 phone conference, particularly regarding HC-11. He went over the changes that were made to the catalog as a result of TWG member conversations and the justifications for those changes.
- Concern was expressed that we have people with personal expertise in the area of subsistence diet. Harry Brower, Jim Berner, Don Callaway, and Henry Huntington all mentioned that they have personal experience with subsistence diet or work with subsistence issues.
- HC-13.1 It was mentioned that existing groups already deal with subsistence diet and utilize this existing infrastructure. However, this existing infrastructure has not been very adaptive when faced with requests to change subsistence hunting regulations justified by climate change. Generally, the marine mammal commission, federal subsistence board, and other organizations do not appear flexible in providing subsistence opportunities as conditions change. Consequently it was decided that the “convening” role was less important as it was already happening, but that a proactive “advocacy” role by the state in support of subsistence issues might be needed to break the gridlock. Expertise might be an important aspect of being taken seriously, so it may need to be quite different from the ombudsman role discussed in HC-1.
- HC-13.3 Example of walrus, which are hauling up on shore. When the walrus are present, need to be able to hunt. If you wait, the walrus will be gone. Implications for hunters if ice seals are listed as endangered – possibly other ways to protect while still allowing subsistence. An educational process to the people making decisions about this may be very useful. But this seems to collapse into 13.1 because the federal subsistence board example in 13.1. There are multiple

organizations making these rules at multiple levels of government (state, federal, international). An authoritative advocacy commission on the part of the state could get this taken seriously. Normal process for all these entities takes months, so we need a streamlined process to respond to changes that communities are facing (expanding seasons/increasing bag limits). There may be two issues here – immediate or emergency action necessary b/c of extreme conditions (leading to hunger) and longer-term changes. This may not be a new entity or position, but an initiative to coordinate and streamline the regulatory process to meet needs of communities under climate change.

- HC-13.4 Suggested that only realistic alternative is to encourage cooking or freezing the meat before consuming it. Problem has been dealt with in Alaska for a long time, e.g. botulism. Consumption of raw muktuk is a tradition thousands of years old, so it is hard to get people to cook these foods prior to consuming them. Education seems to be the biggest issue here. Deep freezing these foods at –15oC for 30 days or –25oC for 10 days will also solve this problem. Young hunters are not getting educational information disseminated. It is done orally on the north slope, but providing educational information about diseases and parasites in written education pieces can be very effective. The native communities do continue to monitor these diseases, so there is some level of awareness and proactivity in this regard. It was noted that overarching issue HC-1.6 may encompass this issue.
- HC-13.5 was not covered due to time limitations.
- The issue of criteria came up and TWG members were asked to start thinking about what criteria might make sense for assessing which potential state actions ought to be forwarded on to the AAG.
- One TWG member asked for the full contact information of other TWG members to facilitate discussion. Facilitator Kristie Ebi informed the group that CCS policy is to put everyone’s email address in the BCC field so that nobody gets unsolicited emails. To get around this issue, Kris suggested an “opt-in” policy to ensure that only the people willing to share their information.
- Finally, facilitator Jason Vogel summarized his perception of the call and where the Health and Culture TWG was at in the process. He suggested that quite a bit of progress had been made in winnowing down the list as the items that repeatedly received attention often coincided with the overarching issues in HC-1. But he also noted that the TWG had essentially discussed only 2 of the 17 categories. To cover all of the others, the pace of discussion would need to increase substantially. This could be facilitated by having the TWG members look through the items where they have particular expertise or that concern them particularly and suggest changes, additions, or revisions prior to the next call. By doing this, we might be able to speed up the pace of discussion on these issues.

**Next steps and agreements:**

1. Revise HC-13.1 to focus on state “advocacy” role.
2. Collapse 13.3 into 13.1.
3. Collapse 13.4 into 13.2.
4. The next TWG meeting will be held on August 13, from 8:30 - 10:00 am.
5. Send out an email that allows people to “opt-in” to be contacted by other TWG members.