

# Alaska's 2008 Work Plan to Develop a Climate Change Strategy

Prepared by DEC February 11, 2008

The Governor's Executive Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change is charged to fulfill the overall goals of Administrative Order 238. The following paragraphs provide a condensed description of the methods to be employed, people and expertise to be engaged and guiding principles to be used in developing the Sub-Cabinet's Strategy for the Governor's consideration.

Administrative Order 238 establishes the overall purpose to be achieved by a Climate Change Strategy as: build scientific knowledge; develop appropriate policies to protect and prepare for impacts; and assess opportunities to reduce emissions and consider benefits of participating in regional or national efforts. The Administrative Order sets out 15 tasks to fulfill these three primary purposes.

The Sub-Cabinet on Climate Change will develop the Strategy by creating various Advisory and Technical Work Groups each charged to develop recommendations to the Sub-Cabinet for selected tasks in the Administrative Order.

The advisory and technical forums will be public forums in which committee membership is appointed by the Sub-Cabinet in order to represent a full spectrum of views and concerns for the range of issues before that forum. For example, the Adaptation Advisory Work Group will assess options to help communities, businesses and citizens take action to prevent foreseeable impacts caused by a changing climate; or if impacts are not preventable, propose actions to best adapt to those impacts. Advisory and technical groups will be comprised of community, native and business leaders; knowledgeable citizens; non-governmental organizations; and federal, state and private sector experts. Climate change is a broad scale issue with environmental, social, cultural and economic consequences effecting the lifestyles and livelihoods of many Alaskans. It is therefore fitting and essential that a broad representation of interests, concerns and knowledge be represented in the advisory and technical forums if the Strategy is to meet the needs of Alaska.

The Sub-Cabinet previously formed an Immediate Actions Work Group and a Research Needs Work Group. In February 2008, the Sub-Cabinet will create an Adaptation Advisory Group and a Mitigation Advisory Group. The Mitigation Advisory Group will have the following five sub-committees (Technical Work Groups) each focusing on selected issues: Energy Supply and Demand; Oil and Gas; Transportation and Land Use; Forestry, Agriculture and Waste; and Cross-Cutting Issues. The Adaptation Advisory Group will have four Technical Work Groups. The topical focus and associated names of these groups is awaiting the results of a preliminary screening analysis of all possible adaptation topics. The analysis is being performed by experts made available through the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Commission on Energy Policy.

The Sub-Cabinet will appoint one of its members or another state policy leader as chair of the Adaptation Advisory Work Group and as chair of the Mitigation Advisory Work Group to ensure efficient deliberation in the forums consistent with the policy direction of the Administrative Order. All Work Group meetings will be open to public attendance and participation. The State's climate change web site, [www.climatechange.alaska.gov](http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov), will be a readily accessible way for anyone to quickly acquire information, stay current on scheduled events and obtain access to documents as they develop.

The advisory and technical forums will need professional and administrative support ranging from facilitators to guide their deliberations, technical staff to assess costs, benefits and other analyses for strategy options under consideration and administrative support for meeting logistics and document support. These support functions will be accomplished largely through contracted resources supplemented by state agency staff. The Sub-Cabinet is considering a contract with a team composed of Information Insights, a Fairbanks based firm, and the Center for Climate Strategies who have conducted similar projects in many other states. The University of Alaska is providing facilitator resources to support the functions of the Immediate Actions Work Group and the Research Needs Work Group.

The contractor will use a stakeholder process proven successful for similar projects in others states where consensus based recommendations are developed at the technical and advisory forums before moving forward to the overall policy body – the Sub-Cabinet. The state contract will more fully describe the consensus based stakeholder process used in the forums. This process will be presented at the February 13 Sub-cabinet meeting and also discussed in each advisory and technical forum as those forums begin. The strategy recommendations originating in the technical and advisory forums are developed, matured and selected exclusively by members of the technical and advisory groups with opportunities for public comment along the way.

The State's Climate Change Strategy will be assembled by the Sub-Cabinet based on the recommendations drafted by the four major forums (Immediate Actions, Research Needs, Adaptation, and Mitigation) and the associated technical forums. The Governor will decide which aspects of the Strategy to implement. Recommendations from each of the forums are likely to be concluded at differing times. Recommendations of the Immediate Actions Work Group are expected this March, while recommendations from the Mitigation Advisory Work Group are expected around December 2008. The recommendations of the Adaptation Advisory Work Group are expected in March of 2009 as the final component. Depending upon the nature of the recommendations from each forum, the Sub-cabinet may chose to communicate with the Governor on selected recommendations prior to completing the comprehensive Strategy document.

The State welcomes your participation in this important project. If you are interested in getting involved, please use the "contact the climate change sub-cabinet" link on the web site [www.climatechange.alaska.gov](http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov) to provide specific information about your interests, knowledge and skills related to the work of the advisory and technical forums.