

February 16, 2007

Honorable Sarah Palin,
Governor of Alaska
State Capitol, Juneau, AK

3 pages
via fax: 907-465-3532

RE: proposals for State of Alaska action on Climate Change

Dear Governor Palin,

I wanted to forward along to you several recommendations I made to the *Alaska Climate Impact Assessment Commission* at its hearing in Juneau on January 24, 2007. The day of the ACIAC hearing in Juneau, I took the liberty of dropping off a copy of my testimony notes at your reception desk there on the 3rd floor. I feel several of these suggestions deserve expeditious consideration for adoption by the State of Alaska, and thus wanted to be sure you were aware of them in advance of the Commissions interim report on March 1, 2007.

Recommendations for State of Alaska to Respond to Climate Change (from Steiner testimony to Alaska Climate Impact Assessment Commission, Jan. 24, 2006):

As the state has a Constitutional mandate and ethical obligation to do what it can to mitigate the threat of climate change in Alaska, the following are seven specific recommended actions I propose for the State of Alaska:

1. Establish the Alaska Office on Climate Change - There is a need to adapt architecture of state government to be responsive to this threat. Thus, I propose the establishment of the *Alaska Office on Climate Change*; or alternatively, a *Joint Federal/State Office on Climate Change* (modeled on JPO, Joint federal/state Land Use Commission, etc.). This office would develop and advance Alaska's climate change policy, develop a Climate Action Plan for Alaska, work with Legislature and Governor to recommend legislation, address and engage federal policy in Congress and the federal administration, and engage in international policy at the United Nations, the G-8, the Arctic Council, etc.

The office would review and adapt all state area plans, facility plans, zoning, building codes, transportation infrastructure plans, etc. with regard to climate change, and would provide continuity after the ACIA Commission sunsets in January 2008 (11 months from now). The office would be a *one-stop-shop* for all issues regarding climate change in Alaska – something desperately needed. Other suggestions regarding governance include the following: Appoint State agency climate change liaison officers (assign existing staff); explore Intergovernmental Compacts such as a Pacific States / BC Task Force on Climate Change and/or States working group (nationwide) on Climate Change; and greater Alaska engagement with the Arctic Council (which has made climate change its principal focus).

2. Immediate Response / Adaptation – I propose that you seek funding from this Legislative session for two immediate state climate adaptation initiatives: 1. A *statewide engineering assessment* that would conduct a village-by-village assessment of immediate and mid-term needs for erosion and flood control (\$1 million); and 2. A *salmon and climate change adaptive management initiative* for ADFG, in collaboration with NMFS and the university, to study adaptive management strategies that may mitigate climate change effects on salmon productivity (\$1 million).

3. Establish an Alaska Climate Response Fund – I propose that the State of Alaska establish an *Alaska Climate Response Fund* from a 10 cent/ barrel tax on all oil produced in the state, (similar to the state's Hazardous Substance Prevention and Response Fund which gets 5 c / barrel). This Fund would be used to support the *Alaska Office on Climate Change* (as proposed above), and other state initiatives regarding climate change.

4. Explore legal claims to recover costs / damages to state assets from outside polluters – I suggest that you direct the Attorney General to examine the legal case for the state to claim damages against federal government / auto industry / oil companies, etc. to recover costs of adaptation / response due to their negligent emissions of greenhouse gases which have caused damage to state resources. Such recoveries should be placed into the *Alaska Climate Response Fund* (as proposed above). This would be one way to recover costs of village relocations. It may be similar to state claims against tobacco companies.

5. Reduce Alaska's Carbon footprint -- Alaska is a small contributor to global CO2 emissions, but we need to show world we are willing to do our part. Thus, I propose that you make it a state goal to double energy efficiency of Alaska's economy by 2020, using tax and subsidy instruments to achieve such.

6. Capture / Sequestration Opportunities – I suggest that Alaska explore opportunities to capture and sequester carbon, in particular capture and re-injection from the North Slope and Cook Inlet producers. As well, I suggest that Alaska evaluate the efficacy of establishing an *Alaska Strategic Hydrocarbon Reserve*, where some amounts of coal and oil are left in reservoirs with covenants attached that these resources will not be produced for energy purposes (thus contributing carbon into the atmosphere), but rather would only be produced in the future (at much higher price) for petrochemical feedstock, etc. where the carbon would *not* be emitted into the atmosphere. Credits from such sequestration should be marketable.

Governor Palin 2/16/07

Page 3.

7. National / International Climate Policy – Alaska has to get aggressive with the issue of reducing global carbon emissions / stabilizing global climate - it is in *our enlightened self-interest*. Thus, I propose that it become Alaska state policy to help stabilize global climate by advocating / supporting policies that will reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by 75% (in order to stabilize atmospheric CO2 levels at twice the pre-industrial level) as soon as possible. Similarly, Alaska policy should be to oppose policies elsewhere that contravene such a goal.

Governor Palin – climate change is as significant a problem as Alaska has ever faced. And as history demonstrates, we can either be a society that chooses to fail or chooses to succeed. The choices we make today on the issue of climate change here are just that significant.

I look forward to your response, and to working with you and your administration toward sustaining our future.

Sincerely,

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