



**State of Alaska**  
**Governor's Climate Change Sub-Cabinet**  
  
**Adaptation Advisory Group Meeting**  
**Meeting #7**  
  
**Health and Culture TWG**  
  
 June 19, 2009  
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## Mission Statement

Climate change poses risks to the health of all Alaskans, but particularly those living in rural communities with limited public health and health care capacity.

Climate change also poses risks to cultural traditions and traditional ways of life.

Therefore, the Health and Culture Technical Work Group identified five (5) key recommendations to...

***increase statewide capacity to avoid, prepare for, and effectively respond to the health and culture risks of climate change in Alaska.***

## H&C-1. Community Climate Impact Assistance

- **Need:** Many aspects of the traditional and subsistence way of life are being made more difficult by climate change
- **Objective:** 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 infrastructure, and subsistence impacts from climate change
- **Structure:** A permanent, high-level state coordinating body within Alaska
- This option is intended to work together with the options proposed by the IAWG

## Four functions:

1. Develop a process for prioritizing and addressing climate challenged communities
2. Help communities to adapt to flooding and erosion either by relocation or protection-in-place
3. Develop a flexible and responsive process to regulate subsistence access under changing climatic conditions
4. Develop principles to guide community climate impact assistance activities

## H&C-2. Augment Surveillance & Control Programs

1. Improve surveillance for vectors & vector-borne diseases in hosts
2. Expand & improve DHSS's hospital discharge & emergency room databases to improve detection of climate change-related diseases
3. Improve health care provider education around infectious disease reporting
4. Create a reporting system for sanitation & wastewater integrity disruptions within DEC
5. Improve interagency notification of drinking water & wastewater violations between MOA, DHSS, DEC & others
6. Provide surveillance & control program updates to stakeholders through a variety of means

## H&C 3. Community Health Impact Evaluation (CHIE)

- **Need:** Actions taken to reduce GHG emissions or improve adaptive capacity may result in unintended impacts (beneficial or adverse) to human health.
- **Objective:** This option would create a system to identify potential influences and facilitate the design of measures to maximize benefits while reducing adverse effects.
- **Structure:** "Project Review Committee" responsible for evaluation of mitigation & adaptation measures

### H&C 3. Community Health Impact Evaluation (CHIE) – cont’d

“Project Review Committee” – Interagency team of public health professionals responsible for:

- Reviewing measures & identifying those in need of in-depth analysis
- In-depth analysis by consultants, agency personnel, & citizen members would determine measures to mitigate adverse health effects

### H&C 4. Address risks to rural sanitation and solid waste management

- Need: Sanitation infrastructure and practices are at risk & posing consequences to human health as a result of flooding, thawing permafrost, increasing temperatures and other factors related to climate change.
- Objective: Consider modification, reconstruction, or relocation of sanitation infrastructure to protect human and environmental health

### H&C 4. Address risks to rural sanitation and solid waste management – cont’d

- Support **community O&M costs**
- Design **inspection/evaluation protocols** to take climate change into account
- Review Class III **solid waste management guidelines**
- Assess AK Capital Improvement Projects (CIPs)
- Provide **resources or incentives to improve** systems
- Establish multiagency MOU to clarify **roles & responsibilities**
- Protect **existing** infrastructure from climate impacts
- Design **future** sanitation infrastructure design in face of change

### H&C 5. Assess & Protect archeological, historical, and cemetery sites at risk

- Need: Archeological sites are at risk from accelerated coastal and river erosion.
- Objective: To protect at-risk sites and adapt design of future sites accordingly by working in cooperation with appropriate local, regional, and statewide entities.
- Structure: Strengthen & expand programs within DNR’s Office of History & Archaeology (OHA)

### H&C 5. Assess & Protect archeological, historical, and cemetery sites at risk – cont’d

Archaeologists, anthropologists, Alaska Native elders, and others would:

- discuss how best to address and prioritize sites at risk and
- develop a plan for the protection or recovery of important at-risk sites.
- Complete a statewide assessment of the gravesites most at risk;
- assist in identifying and opening new gravesites;
- convene a respectful discussion about gravesites and explore best practices; and
- provide relocation assistance for existing at-risk gravesites.

### H&C 5. Assess & Protect archeological, historical, and cemetery sites at risk – cont’d

- Establish a new program area within the Office of History and Archaeology (OHA), with a dedicated archaeologist / anthropologist position and funding for travel and equipment to coordinate and facilitate cemetery issues. The State agency responsible for a mitigation or adaptation measure would forward a request to the PRC chair for an evaluation, along with a full description of the measure.
- 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
- 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



*Thank You!*

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