

**Alaska Marine Policy Forum**

Summary of Wednesday, September 26, 2012 call

Hosts: Molly McCammon mccammon@aoos.org and David Christie david.christie@alaska.edu

***Alaska Marine Policy Forum is a bimonthly teleconference for Alaskans to network and share information about marine policy, budgets, and legislation at state, national, and international levels, sponsored by Alaska Sea Grant and the Alaska Ocean Observing System.***

***Bob King, Senator Begich’s Office:***

The Continuing Resolution to fund the federal budget for the next 6 months passed, but there is much more work to be done. Early Sat morning the Coast Guard bill passed by unanimous consent and now goes to conference committee with the House. It includes a lot of provisions important to Alaska including funding for icebreaker planning and the Oil Spill Recovery Institute. Two provisions were deleted in the final hours: a 3-year extension of the vessel discharge and Senator Inouye’s international pirate fishing provision. Senator Begich will try to get these back in the conference committee.

Senator Begich introduced several new bills, although no action is anticipated soon: (1) a revised Arctic Science bill (S. 3613), co-sponsored by Senator Murkowski, that replaces an earlier version to provide a stable continuing source of funding for Arctic research and, (2) monitoring and national seafood marketing legislation which addresses many of Alaska’s needs, but does not have funding.

The Secretary of Commerce approved Chinook disaster declarations for the Yukon, Kuskokwim and Cook Inlet regions. The Delegation is working with state and local groups to identify funding needs and develop a budget, so that it can be included in pending legislation for drought relief, and combined with other fishing disaster appropriations for Massachusetts and Mississippi.

The Delegation is also pushing for a national plan and funding to address the tsunami marine debris issue. The scoping has been impressive, and the pledge from Japan for $6m to aid the effort is welcome, but the Delegation strongly feels that more help is needed from the federal government.

Bob also announced an October 11 Commerce Committee hearing to be chaired by Senator Begich at 10 am at the UAA Gorsuch Commons Room 106. The hearing will address lessons learned from this summer’s drilling activities in the Arctic. Speakers from the Coast Guard, NOAA, Department of Interior, Shell, and the North Slope Borough have been invited.

The lame duck session is scheduled to start November 13 and will hopefully address Senator Jon Tester’s sportsmen package, which includes Alaska’s duck stamp provision, fiscal issues and tax extensions.

The four originating co-chairs of the Senate Oceans Caucus – including Alaska Senators Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich - have been honored with the first ever Watkins Award, created by the Consortium for Ocean Leadership in honor of Admiral James D. Watkins, who dedicated so much of his life to public service and had a remarkable effect on the ocean science and policy community. The award is intended to recognize outstanding contributions to ocean research and education, and is to be presented only when the highest standard of merit has been proven and recognizes those who have distinguished themselves as champions of ocean science through sponsorship of legislation, development of sound ocean policy, or promoting federal investment to advance the field of oceanography.

***Stefanie Moreland is back working for the Governor’s Office in Juneau* as the lead staffer on fisheries, ocean and Arctic issues.** Her top priority now is addressing the Chinook salmon fishery disasters and developing a plan following the September 13 declaration. Stefanie said the State is assessing and quantifying impacts as much as possible to get information to the delegation. She will play a coordination role for the State. It is early in the process, but if federal funds are made available, their use will be bound by appropriation language. The state is also working with NOAA to draft a spending plan and obtain public input to guide funding distribution. The state will hold a Chinook Salmon Symposium October 22-23 at the Egan Center. ADF&G is preparing a knowledge gap analysis for this that will help identify scientific research needs and inform state and federal budget discussions.

***Rob Earl, Representative Bob Herron’s office***

All but two members have been appointed to the new Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, many with experience from the Northern Waters Task Force. . The commission will be hiring a staff person, and will likely have their first meeting in December, hopefully with a representative from Canada’s Northern Vision process. Members include:

* Senators Bert Stedman, Lyman Hoffman and Cathy Giessel
* Representatives Alan Austerman, Bob Herron and Beth Kerttula
* Pat Pourchot, Dept of Interior, federal govt rep
* Reggie Joule, Kotzebue IRA/tribal entity rep
* Stephen Trimble, URS Corp, mining industry rep
* Lisa Pekich, ConocoPhillips, oil & gas industry rep
* Lawson Brigham, UAF, university rep
* Stephanie Madsen, At Sea Processors Association, fisheries rep
* Chris Hladick, Unalaska city manager, local govt rep
* Denise Michels, Nome mayor, coastal community rep
* Nils Andreassen, Institute of North, international Arctic organization rep
* Layla Hughes, conservation group rep
* Steve Scalzo, Foss Marine, marine transportation rep
* Elizabeth Moore, NANA corporation, ANCSA corporation rep
* Peter Garay, American Pilots Association, marine pilots rep

For more information go to <http://housemajority.org/spon.php?id=27hcr23>

***Kristan Uhlenbrock, Public Affairs Team at American Geophysical Union***

AGU is one of the largest scientist organizations in the country (over 60,000 members) and has significantly increased their public policy program. In particular, they have focused on trying to connect scientists with policy makers to educate them about the value of science. Their main mission is to promote earth/space science to increase discovery. Their annual fall meeting in San Francisco draws over 20,000 participants, the world’s largest such gathering. AGU sponsored its first Science Policy Conference in April/May 2012 with two tracks: oceans and the Arctic. Another conference is planned for 2013. The public affairs team does a lot of communications training on how to talk to Congress, which translates well to any audience. All materials can be found on their website: [www.agu.org/sci\_pol/](http://www.agu.org/sci_pol/) . These include science questions to use at a town hall or to ask your local representative, and letters to the editor and op-ed templates. An elections website identifies science issues relevant to regions throughout the country, tied to the economy and jobs. You can also receive science policy alerts and budget updates and don’t have to be a member to receive them. AGU also has employed lawyers to provide advice to scientists, especially those who work in government, concerning what documents should be saved (in response to Freedom of Information Act requests) and other ways to be prepared in the work you do so you can respond to external criticism. You can contact the team at sciencepolicy@agu.org.

***Bob Pawlowski****,* ***Alaska Legislature staff***

The Cook Inlet Consequence Analysis workshop is being held October 30-31 at UAA. For more information, go to <http://www.cookinletriskassessment.com/>

***Lawson Brigham***

The Arctic Council continues with development of an oil spill and response agreement with a goal of signing at the next ministerial meeting in 2013. Lawson is on the team.

***Molly McCammon, Alaska Ocean Observing System***

The National Research Council is soliciting nominations for membership on an ad hoc committee that will be writing a report for a new Polar Research Board study on Emerging Research Questions in the Arctic. Submit names to Elizabeth Finkelman (efinkelman@nas.edu) no later than Friday, October 5. Also, AOOS is hiring a new program coordinator. Check [www.aoos.org](http://www.aoos.org) for details.

***Cynthia Suchman, updates from North Pacific Research Board***

NPRB released its 2013 $4 million request for proposals on September 28. Proposals are due December 14 and the RFP includes a focus section on social sciences. A separate RFP for long-term monitoring program will be issued at a later date. Alaska Marine Science Symposium abstracts were due September 27 for the January 21-25 2013 event. An open workshop on Arctic research synthesis efforts will be held Sunday, January 20 prior to the symposium. Cynthia reports that NPRB is moving forward with planning for an Arctic research program in 2015 and is looking for funding partners. Contact NPRB staff for more details. The Graduate Student Research Award program solicitation will launch Oct 1, with applications due February 15. The annual photo contest is underway, with submissions due in March. Check the NPRB website for several position announcements.

**Next Alaska Marine Policy Forum: Tuesday, Nov 27th at 1pm** (note the deviation from our regular 3rd Wednesday of the month due to Thanksgiving week)