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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Climate Change Sub-Cabinet Taps Citizens to Build Climate Change Strategy

The Governor's Climate Change Sub-Cabinet has selected more than 100 Alaskans to help craft the State's climate change strategy. An overwhelming number of people volunteered or were nominated from throughout Alaska to serve on advisory and technical workgroups.

Governor Sarah Palin, through Administrative Order 238, established the Climate Change Sub-Cabinet and charged it with recommending measures to respond to the threats and challenges associated with climate change. Specific measures are to be assembled into a climate change strategy. The Sub-Cabinet has initiated a broad-based stakeholder process to identify measures and to help develop the strategy.

"We invited Alaskans to get involved and were impressed with the breadth of knowledge and experience represented in the responses we received. Many people very much want to be part of the effort," said Commissioner of Environmental Conservation Larry Hartig, chair of the sub-cabinet. "We had a truly exceptional group from which to choose, all willing to devote valuable time and expertise to developing a long-range climate change strategy for Alaska."

The Sub-Cabinet's efforts are organized into two broad themes. "Adaptation" includes those measures that can be taken to respond to the effects of climate change. "Mitigation" refers to measures to reduce Alaska's greenhouse gas emissions and to address other sources and causes of climate change.

Over the course of the next year, the efforts of two Advisory Groups – one focused on Adaptation and the other on Mitigation -- will each be supported by the efforts of four or five technical work groups. The Adaptation technical work groups are focusing on areas such as how to

address present and future impacts on 1) infrastructure, including roads, buildings, ports, runways, and pipelines; 2) human health and culture; 3) ecosystems and the economies that depend on them; and 4) new shipping routes in the north.

On the Mitigation side, technical work groups will examine ways in which greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced through conservation, efficiency and technological advances. Technical work groups have been assembled around general greenhouse gas mitigation action categories 1) oil and gas; 2) energy supply and demand; 3) transportation and land use; 4) forestry, agriculture and waste; and 5) residential and government.

The Adaptation and Mitigation advisory groups will meet bi-monthly while the technical work groups will meet monthly. The advisory groups will assemble information from the technical work groups and deliver final recommendations to the Sub-Cabinet. The Sub-Cabinet, in turn, will evaluate the recommendations and submit a proposed climate change strategy to the Governor. This should be completed within one year. All meetings will be announced and open to the public.

The stakeholder process will commence in May 2008. The efforts of the three existing work groups formed with a short-term focus (Immediate Actions, Alternative Energy, and Research) will continue as part of the new, longer-term organization.

“While it is too early to predict specific results, when 100 bright, energetic and innovative Alaskans come together to solve problems, things happen,” concluded Hartig. “Every Alaskan has been, or will be affected by climate change. And every Alaskan has a stake in this important effort to chart our climate change course.”

For additional details and other history on climate change efforts in the state, please visit the website at: www.climatechange.alaska.gov/

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