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**Sub-Cabinet marks milestones in development of Alaska Climate Change Strategy**

*Stakeholders prepare final recommendations; Sub-Cabinet thanks more than 100 volunteers and looks forward to next steps in developing state climate change strategy.*

**(Juneau, AK)** Volunteers from across the state met last week to finalize their recommendations to Governor Palin's Climate Change Sub-Cabinet on measures Alaska can take to better prepare for a warming environment and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Governor Sarah Palin established the sub-cabinet in September 2007 and tasked it with developing an Alaska Climate Change Strategy. The sub-cabinet initiated the stakeholder process to receive the public's input on what key elements need to be part of the strategy.

"An exceptional and diverse group of more than 100 Alaskans volunteered and has devoted valuable time and expertise to advance long-range climate change planning for Alaska," said Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Larry Hartig, chair of the sub-cabinet.

The public advisory groups are organized around two themes. "Adaptation" includes measures that can be taken to respond to the effects of climate change. "Mitigation" refers to measures to reduce Alaska's greenhouse gas emissions, including through energy conservation and efficiency.

Over the past year, two Advisory Groups – one focused on Adaptation and the other on Mitigation – and 11 technical work groups have met monthly or bimonthly and developed their recommendations. All meetings were open to the public.

“Their work will help guide the state in finding workable and beneficial solutions in the coming decades and will inform our decisions on issues such as energy emissions, food production and municipal planning to ensure our industries and our communities remain viable and healthy in a changing landscape,” said Hartig.

The final recommendations of the stakeholder groups will be contained in a written report to be delivered to the sub-cabinet early this fall. The sub-cabinet will be considering these recommendations in crafting the draft Alaska Climate Change Strategy. The sub-cabinet plans to take the draft strategy out for public review late this year. A final draft will be submitted to the governor for her consideration following the public review.

At a reception for the work group volunteers last week, Commissioner Hartig distributed certificates from Governor Palin to each volunteer acknowledging and thanking them for their contribution.

In addition to convening the public Adaptation and Mitigation Advisory Groups, the sub-cabinet also formed, in November 2007, an “Immediate Action Work Group” to identify actions that needed to be taken in the short-term to protect critical infrastructure in coastal communities from flooding and erosion being made worse by warming conditions. Representatives from key federal and state agencies participated on this work group. Projects recommended by the work group in 2008 and 2009 are underway. These and other recommendations of the work group are described in their April 2009 final report.

A fourth work group, the “Research Needs Work Group” has been identifying research and data gaps that need to be addressed to help Alaska decision-makers responding to climate change. The work group’s draft report was posted on the sub-cabinet’s website last week.

Alaskans are encouraged to review the progress of the work groups and the Climate Change Sub-cabinet by going to <http://www.climatechange.alaska.gov/>.