



### **Alaska Marine Policy Forum**

Summary from Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Host: Darcy Dugan, AOOS

Notes by Molly Cain, Alaska Sea Grant

*The 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 (AOOS). Contact [dawn.montano@alaska.edu](mailto:dawn.montano@alaska.edu) to receive email reminders and agendas for upcoming calls, and summary notes following each call.*

#### ***Alaska Congressional Delegation Updates***

##### ***Mary Eileen Manning & Akacia Halliday-Isaac, Senator Sullivan's Office***

- We are finishing up appropriations season.
- [The Alaska Salmon Research Task Force](#) has been meeting to identify data gaps and research needed to increase the abundance of salmon. You can [register to attend their last public meeting](#) before they publish their recommendations on May 22.
- There is a Commerce Committee markup on May 16. They will look at the a bill to reauthorization of Marine Debris Program, Sen Murkowski's bill to reauthorize the National Landslide Preparedness Act, and some other ocean related bills, including the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Act and the Illegal Red Snapper Enforcement Act
- Mary Eileen will be joining the Marine Debris Foundation meeting in Sitka in late May. A representative from Sen. Whitehouse's office will also attend.

Q: Did HABHRCA (the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act) get passed?

Mary Eileen: It has not gone through the markup process on the Senate side. A couple versions have already passed in the House. Once we have bills on both sides, we'll be able to reconcile the text. We are stalled on the Senate side and keep pressing. There is a lot of interest and co-sponsors (about 15).

##### ***Senator Murkowski's Office***

*Matt Robinson*

- We are wrapping up our FY25 appropriations, including our requests to the committee, and will be able to start focusing on non-appropriations related things.

##### ***Tyson Fick, Representative Peltola's Office***

- We have also been working on appropriations; there is a lot related to oceans and fish.
  - [Rep. Peltola's appropriations requests](#)

- Tyson wanted to follow-up about the [Alaska's Right to Produce Act](#). From Rep. Peltola's perspective, it unintentionally included the Bering Sea resilience area and opened it up to the possibility of bottom trawling in the area. The primary sponsor is Rep. Stauber (R-MN). When we asked to make that fix by pulling the climate resilience part out of the bill, he said no. This put Rep. Peltola in a tough position because there is a lot that she likes in the bill. But she had made a commitment to Alaskans that that part of the bill would be fixed so she voted "present." Tyson wanted to make sure there is awareness of the reason why.

### *Alaska Legislative Updates*

**None**

### *Invited Speakers*

#### **Kaare Sikuaq Erickson, [Arctic Watch](#)**

- Arctic Watch is operated by the [Marine Exchange of Alaska \(MXAK\)](#)
  - Mission: Saving lives, property, and protecting the environment by preventing maritime disasters
  - Arctic Watch Operations Center
    - 31-person staff in Juneau; many are retired Coast Guard
    - 24-hr watch center to monitor and provide information to vessels
    - Biggest client is the Coast Guard
  - Have developed a system of marine safety sites: towers with weather sensors, receivers, transceivers, communications equipment
- Example areas of work
  - Sea traffic management
  - Providing environmental data (e.g., current weather, ice reports, forecast, storm warnings, notice to mariners)
  - Deconflict maritime use (e.g., lightering area specifications)
  - Assist vessels in distress
- Why Sea Traffic Management is needed (examples)
  - Loss of lives, ship, cargo, US Coast Guard helicopter and spill of fuel oil and diesel
  - Regulations are not enough, need infrastructure and information systems
  - No sea traffic management = high risk transits
  - It works
    - Monitored 7,826 Aleutian transits in July 2021–July 2022
    - Vessels of concern: 5% (422 vessels)
    - Deviations: 74 vessels
- From Arctic Council PAME Report and Bering Strait Voices workshops: Responding to increasing traffic in the Bering Strait and Arctic calls for buildout of better sea traffic management, monitoring, and emergency response in the region.
  - [Kawerak Marine Program](#) plays a central role in this project
- What Arctic Watch is working on now:
  - Reinstate the Arctic Waterways Safety Council
  - Further develop system to inform the Annual Waterways Voluntary Users Guide

- Continue developing other tools: AW LiveView, Geofencing
- PACTRACS Accounts—If you know someone interested in using the tools for community benefit
- Arctic Watch Partners Meeting in Juneau, Jan 2024 - report coming out soon
- Contact for Kaare Sikuaq Erickson: [Sikuaq@ikaagun.com](mailto:Sikuaq@ikaagun.com)

### **Audience Q&A**

Q: Could you elaborate on your role in Arctic Watch?

A: Kaare was brought on to do engagement and workshops. He meets with the tribal delegates. There are 40 delegates from the Bering Strait. He's not sure what will happen after this calendar year but is a spokesperson for the project right now.

### ***Roberta Tuurraq Glenn and Donna Hauswer, [Alaska Arctic Observatory and Knowledge Hub \(AAOKH\)](#)***

- Roberta Tuurraq Glenn: AAOKH Project Coordinator and Community Liaison
- Donna Hauser: AAOKH science lead and research faculty at University of Alaska Fairbanks International Arctic Research Center
- AAOKH
  - A large, collaborative project. Key component: network of local observers who lead traditional Inupiaq ways of life.
  - Observers document a diverse set of observations such as sea ice conditions, weather, wind, wildlife they are harvesting.
    - Sustained, holistic, year-round observations
    - Includes narrative observations and special projects (e.g., taking ocean measurements in Kotzebue, mapping the trails built by spring whalers in Utqiagvik)
    - Currently over 10,000 observations housed in AAOKH
    - Current participating communities: Kinigin (Wales), Qikiqtagruk (Kotzebue), Tikigaq (Point Hope), Kali (Point Lay), Ulguniq Wainwright), Utqiagvik (Barrow), Qaaktugvik (Kaktovik)
- 3 main priorities:
  - Sustain and support Indigenous observers to document environmental changes
  - Create educational opportunities for the next generation of Indigenous scholars and leaders
  - Make the observations useful
- Engage future leaders & scientists
  - Provide work for graduate and undergraduate students and provide space for peer mentorship and support
- Partnerships
  - Observers want their observations to be used for planning and decision-making
  - AAOKH is continually exploring partnerships with federal agencies and indigenous organizations
  - We help to facilitate conversations between researchers and community members to streamline their needs and priorities

- We are actively seeking new funding strategies and partners/project ideas
- For more information
  - Emails
    - [rjglenn@alaska.edu](mailto:rjglenn@alaska.edu)
    - [dhauser2@alaska.edu](mailto:dhauser2@alaska.edu)
  - Social media
    - [@arcticAOK](#)
    - [Facebook](#)
  - [Recent AAOKH publication](#)
  - [Storymap](#)

### *Announcements*

#### **Molly Cain, Alaska Sea Grant**

- [Community Partnership Development Grant RFP](#) is open. Deadline to apply: May 28.

*Please reach out to [Ginny Eckert](#) or [Sheyna Wisdom](#) if you would like to hear about a particular topic during future forums.*

**Next Alaska Marine Policy Forum will be July 17, at 1pm.**

Register here: <https://alaskaseagrant.org/event/alaska-marine-policy-forum-july-2024/>