

Press Release
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For Immediate Release
Contact:
Kathy Farrow
703-525-0111
U.S. Arctic Research Commission

Commission emphasizes value of Arctic actions in National Ocean Policy

Anchorage, AK - Dr. John Farrell, Executive Director of the US Arctic Research Commission (USARC), will testify before the House Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs about how the five Arctic-related actions in the National Ocean Policy will increase economic growth in Alaska and will enhance security. The hearing is scheduled for 10:00 am (ADT) on April 3, 2012, and will be chaired by Congressman Don Young (AK-R). It will be held in the Assembly Chambers of the Z.J. Loussac Library-Main Branch, 3600 Denali Street, Anchorage. Click [here](#) to view Farrell's testimony.

Farrell and Robert Winokur, US Navy, co-led a team of experts, from a wide range of federal departments and agencies, to draft one of the nine policy objectives of the National Ocean Policy titled, "Changing Conditions in the Arctic." "Our goal was to address environmental stewardship needs in the Arctic Ocean and adjacent coastal areas in the face of climate-induced and other environmental changes," said Farrell.

In the policy, the Arctic Ocean is identified as a priority because rapidly diminishing sea ice is presenting opportunities and challenges with great implications for Alaska and the nation as a whole. With broad stakeholder input, particularly from Alaskans, five actions were identified: (a) advance Arctic mapping and charting; (b) enhance Arctic communication systems, (c) increase oceanographic observations in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, (d) improve preparation and response management to emergencies, and (e) advance observations and forecasts of Arctic sea ice. These will provide a unifying framework for better coordination and integration for Arctic operations.

"If we carry out the five specific actions in the National Ocean Policy that are focused on the Arctic, we will improve economic growth, environmental health, and national security in not only Alaska, but in the nation as a whole," said Farrell.

The Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 established the USARC (www.arctic.gov). Its principal duties are to develop and recommend an integrated national Arctic research policy and to assist in establishing a national Arctic research program plan to implement the policy. Commissioners also facilitate cooperation between the federal government, state and local governments, and other nations with respect to Arctic research, both basic and applied.

The USARC, which sets goals (http://www.arctic.gov/publications/2009-10_usarc_goals.html) for the approximately \$400 million annual U.S. Arctic Research Program, has urged federal emphasis on integrated Arctic Ocean research, renewed programs related to the prevention of and response to oil spills in ice-covered waters, and to strengthen Arctic health and indigenous language research.

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Media Contact: Kathy Farrow, 703-525-0112, kfarrow@arctic.gov