



# SPOTLIGHT ON CANADA-U.S. COLLABORATION: ARCTIC MARINE SHIPPING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## **SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

FEBRUARY 24, 2011

... an increasingly busy Arctic calls for a rapid response to some of the uncertainties that exist. It is important that policy makers and administrators – in Alaska, Canada and the United States – recognize and understand those challenges.

The Institute of the North, in partnership with the Consulate of Canada, hosted its inaugural Arctic Policy Forum on February 24, 2011. Setting the stage for a quarterly event, the evening reception provided a networking opportunity for Alaskans to connect around Arctic issues. Future events will feature multiple perspectives intended to develop in attendees a common understanding of Arctic issues.

This first forum featured Consul Jennifer Loten of the Consulate of Canada in Anchorage who highlighted Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy. This international platform will allow Canada to demonstrate responsible stewardship in the Arctic and comprises four pillars: exercising sovereignty, promoting economic and social development, protecting the Arctic environment, and improving and devolving governance. Watch the video of her presentation at [www.institutenorth.org](http://www.institutenorth.org).

The following day, the Institute of the North coordinated a symposium hosted by the Government of Canada and focused on Arctic marine shipping and the environment, and highlighting opportunities for U.S. – Canada collaboration. Recommendations from the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment (AMSA) formed the backdrop as experts from Alaska and Canada shared some of the latest information from work across the Arctic. Panel discussions provided an excellent analysis of the gaps in Northern infrastructure and how to address them; circumpolar environmental response capacity, including coastal planning and environmental management; and vessel tracking systems.

The symposium opened with a compelling overview by Alaska Lt. Gov. Mead Treadwell of why the Arctic – and collaboration and leadership in the region – matters, and that message was reinforced by speakers throughout the day. Not only is the

### Lunchtime Keynote on Public Diplomacy and Collaboration: Hot Ideas for a Cool Climate

- Education: creating new curricula
- Field trips to the Arctic for thought leaders across boundaries
- Slogan, logo, creative event
- Arctic World Games
- Global commons in the Arctic needs to be communicated
- International Arctic Corps – comprising international scientist, business leaders, grad students
- Arctic Chamber of Commerce
- International Arctic Prize
- Arctic Development Book for the private equity community
- Increased outreach for the Arctic Council



## Community input is a valuable component of responsible, relevant public policy.

Arctic home to the peoples and communities living there but it has a profound impact on the economies of its nations, many of which rely on natural resource development. At the same time, an increasingly busy Arctic calls for a rapid response to some of the uncertainties that exist. It is important that policy makers and administrators – in Alaska, Canada and the United States – recognize and understand those challenges.

AMSA was the first Arctic Council document to require consent from all eight of its nation members: U.S., Canada, Russian Federation, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Denmark through Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The report was foundational in that it provided a baseline for data on Arctic marine traffic, as well as recommendations of areas for focus and governance. AMSA emphasized the necessity for Arctic infrastructure and understanding the use and challenges as Arctic shipping increases. Following the 2009 report, subsequent discussion and work have contributed toward a roadmap to address the recommendations. The Arctic Council has recognized the importance of AMSA findings by committing to two additional years to continue implementation.

Another partnership to note is that of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) and its recent formation of an Arctic Caucus. PNWER recognizes the value of the U.S. – Canada economic partnership, particularly of its Northern regions, which have large geographic areas with small populations and rich natural resources. Alaska and Northern Canada are essential to a successful Arctic and the sub-regional work being conducted through PNWER helps ensure that success. The State of Alaska's formation of the Northern Waters Task Force complements these efforts.

In developing infrastructure, it is important to plan for the long term and involve communities early and throughout the plan. Community input is a valuable component of responsible, relevant public policy. Infrastructure is a broad term that may include government services, such as icebreakers or search and rescue; private services, such as salvage; or information, such as weather, ice, and safe navigation



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products. The infrastructure deficit noted in AMSA is of concern to Northern communities, both in their ability to develop strong economies and vibrant communities, and in their ability to respond in case of crisis. In addressing gaps, policy makers should recognize that Information, Skills, Systems and Assets (ISSA) are essential to implementing AMSA negotiated recommendations.

Commonly articulated between all panels was the importance of the planning process and the necessity for cohesion in closing the gaps. The U.S. and Canada share common ecosystems objectives for the Arctic region – prevention, preparedness, response and recovery – yet each nation has a different approach in shaping policy. Panelists highlighted examples such as Canada’s Beaufort Region Environmental Assessment and the Beaufort Sea Partnership; and tools like the U.S. Environmental Response Management Application. Cross border collaboration through the CanUS North Exercise in 2010 and the resulting CanUS North Joint Plan was spotlighted as a link through which to coordinate response information and technology. The readiness exists; however, the resources remain limited and one speaker called for cohesion between U.S. and Canadian investments to fill the gaps without overlaps.

## **The readiness exists; however, the resources remain limited...**

Current and future polar orbiting ice observing satellite imagery will allow efficiency in monitoring Arctic shipping and may foster investment. With increased traffic, tracking vessels can improve safe and environmentally sound operations. One U.S. speaker pointed to the Bering Strait as “Alaska’s Gibraltar”– a major transit and potential chokepoint for traffic into and out of the North Pacific Arctic – and spoke of the need for Arctic domain awareness. By contrast, Canada’s 1970 Arctic Water Pollution Policy Act was extended into mandatory registration for ships with the 2010 implementation of NORDREG through which the Canadian Coast Guard ensures that ships in the Canadian Arctic meet AWPPA regulatory requirements.

It was clear from the active engagement throughout the day that the symposium was unique in offering the opportunity for policy and science to co-mingle. And while there was considerable discussion around the US and Canada’s well managed disputes, the forum demonstrated that there is value in detailed exchanges on these questions outside of the decision-making arena.

*Canada was pleased to sponsor the inaugural forum and looks forward to participating in future events.*

The Arctic Policy Forum is a quarterly event convened by the Institute of the North, designed to connect policy makers and administrators, academics, community members and other stakeholders in Alaska to one another and to new and emerging policy issues in the Arctic. These respond to the Institute of the North’s mission to act as an advocate for Alaska in Arctic infrastructure and policy.

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Visit [www.institutenorth.org](http://www.institutenorth.org) to see presentations from the Arctic Policy Forum, as well as video of speakers. Contact Nils Andreassen at 907 771-2448 or [nandreassen@institutenorth.org](mailto:nandreassen@institutenorth.org) to learn more about the Institute’s Arctic program.