

Alaska Arctic Business Roundtable

Co-hosted by the State Chamber of Commerce and Institute of the North

Guests:

- Admiral Robert Papp, Special Representative for the Arctic Region
- Ambassador David Balton, U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries
- Julie Gourley, Senior Arctic Official, U.S. Department of State

Background: The Alaska Arctic Business Roundtable, hosted by the Institute of the North first in 2013, provides a space for Alaska businesses to engage in Arctic issues and share priorities for business-related activity. It's not meant to duplicate existing efforts but could potentially now serve to provide a feedback loop between the Arctic Economic Council process and Alaskan businesses, if the private sector so chooses. It's also a forum to connect with federal processes that could potentially impact Alaskan business interests.

During Canada's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the Arctic states and indigenous Permanent Participant organizations facilitated the creation of a circumpolar business forum - the Arctic Economic Council (AEC). The creation of the AEC comes at a critical time, as the private sector is increasingly seen as a partner in the future success of the Arctic. Four Alaska business leaders were recently appointed to represent the United States, and three more by Permanent Participants, as part of the initial meeting of the AEC. New opportunities abound in the Arctic, and increased activity coincides with the United States assuming chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2015.

Key takeaways – federal delegation:

- Hearing from Alaskans about potential priorities for the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council
- Sharing information about that process, including a theme of "One Arctic" and possible issues addressed including remote, alternative energy; communications infrastructure; and water and sanitation issues
- Multiple meetings to take place in Alaska, with at least one each in Permanent Participant communities
- Also use this opportunity to inform the rest of the U.S. and in this regard searching for a "national imperative"
- Leverage Park Service anniversary
- Educate federal family about the reality of the Arctic, both challenges and opportunities

Key takeaways – Alaskan businesses:

- Alaskans, and Alaska's private sector, should be at the table, preferring things to be done "with us, not to us"
- Ensure that business opportunities come to Alaskan companies, including to Alaska Native corporations
- Consider emphasizing workforce development and Alaskan employment, including to cultivate legacy careers
- Address lack of an industrial base and infrastructure gap, as well as access to resource development
- Recognize Alaska's assets – fisheries management, reduction of oil and gas footprint, mineral development
- Increase NOAA investment in navigation charts, bathymetry and maritime information, including marine traffic support
- Balance between emerging economic opportunities and environmental protection, subsistence activity
- Food, Fibre, and Fuel – perhaps an agenda that addresses food production or security, telecommunications, and energy
- Search for best practices from other Arctic nations, where offshore activity is taking place