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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

January 21, 2015

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Executive Order --- Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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ENHANCING COORDINATION OF NATIONAL EFFORTS IN THE ARCTIC

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to prepare the Nation for a changing Arctic and enhance coordination of national efforts in the Arctic, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. The Arctic has critical long-term strategic, ecological, cultural, and economic value, and it is imperative that we continue to protect our national interests in the region, which include: national defense; sovereign rights and responsibilities; maritime safety; energy and economic benefits; environmental stewardship; promotion of science and research; and preservation of the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea as reflected in international law.

Over the past 60 years, climate change has caused the Alaskan Arctic to warm twice as rapidly as the rest of the United States, and will continue to transform the Arctic as its consequences grow more severe. Over the past several decades, higher atmospheric temperatures have led to a steady and dramatic reduction in Arctic sea ice, widespread glacier retreat, increasing coastal erosion, more acidic oceans, earlier spring snowmelt, thawing permafrost, drier landscapes, and more extensive insect outbreaks and wildfires, thus changing the accessibility and natural features of this remote region. As a global leader, the United States has the responsibility to strengthen international cooperation to mitigate the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, understand more fully and manage more effectively the adverse effects of climate change, protect life and property, develop and manage resources responsibly, enhance the quality of life of Arctic inhabitants, and serve as stewards for valuable and vulnerable ecosystems. In doing so, we must rely on science-based decisionmaking and respect the value and utility of the traditional knowledge of Alaska Native peoples. As the United States assumes the Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, it is more important than ever that we have a coordinated national effort that takes advantage of our combined expertise and efforts in the Arctic region to promote our shared values and priorities.

As the Arctic has changed, the number of Federal working groups created to address the growing strategic importance and accessibility of this critical region has increased. Although these groups have made significant progress and achieved important milestones, managing the broad range of interagency activity in the Arctic requires coordinated planning by the Federal Government, with input by partners and stakeholders, to facilitate Federal, State, local, and Alaska Native tribal government and similar Alaska Native organization, as well as private and nonprofit sector, efforts in the Arctic.

Sec. 2. Arctic Executive Steering Committee. (a) Establishment. There is established an

Arctic Executive Steering Committee (Steering Committee), which shall provide guidance to executive departments and agencies (agencies) and enhance coordination of Federal Arctic policies across agencies and offices, and, where applicable, with State, local, and Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations, academic and research institutions, and the private and nonprofit sectors.

(b) Membership. The Steering Committee shall consist of:

(i) the heads, or their designees, of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Domestic Policy Council, and the National Security Council;

(ii) the Executive Officer of the Steering Committee, who shall be designated by the Chair of the Steering Committee (Chair); and

(iii) the Deputy Secretary or equivalent officer from the Departments of State, Defense, Justice, the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, Transportation, Energy, and Homeland Security; the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the National Science Foundation; the Arctic Research Commission; and the Office of Management and Budget; the Assistant to the President for Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs, or his or her designee; and other agencies or offices as determined appropriate by the Chair.

(c) Administration.

(i) The Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, or his or her designee, shall be the Chair of the Executive Steering Committee. The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, or his or her designee, shall be the Vice Chair. Under the leadership of the Chair, the Steering Committee will meet quarterly, or as appropriate, to shape priorities, establish strategic direction, oversee implementation, and ensure coordination of Federal activities in the Arctic.

(ii) The Steering Committee shall coordinate with existing working groups established by Executive Order or statute.

(iii) As appropriate, the Chair of the Steering Committee may establish subcommittees and working groups, consisting of representatives from relevant agencies, to focus on specific key issues and assist in carrying out its responsibilities.

(iv) Agencies shall provide administrative support and additional resources, as appropriate, to support their participation in the Steering Committee to the extent

permitted by law and within existing appropriations. Each agency shall bear its own expenses for supporting its participation in the Steering Committee and associated working groups.

(v) Each member of the Steering Committee shall provide the Executive Officer with a single point of contact for coordinating efforts with interagency partners, collaborating with State, local, and Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations, and assisting in carrying out the functions and duties assigned by the Steering Committee.

Sec. 3. Responsibilities of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, in coordination with the heads of relevant agencies and under the direction of the Chair, shall:

(a) provide guidance and coordinate efforts to implement the priorities, objectives, activities, and responsibilities identified in National Security Presidential Directive 66/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25, Arctic Region Policy, the National Strategy for the Arctic Region and its Implementation Plan, and related agency plans;

(b) provide guidance on prioritizing Federal activities, consistent with agency authorities, while the United States is Chair of the Arctic Council, including, where appropriate, recommendations for resources to use in carrying out those activities; and

(c) establish a working group to provide a report to the Steering Committee by May 1, 2015, that:

(i) identifies potential areas of overlap between and within agencies with respect to implementation of Arctic policy and strategic priorities and provides recommendations to increase coordination and reduce any duplication of effort, which may include ways to increase the effectiveness of existing groups; and

(ii) provides recommendations to address any potential gaps in implementation.

Sec. 4. Duties of the Executive Officer. The Executive Officer shall be responsible for facilitating interagency coordination efforts related to implementing the guidance and strategic priorities developed by the Steering Committee. The Executive Officer shall coordinate with the Chair and the Special Advisor on Arctic Science and Policy at the Department of State to provide regular reports to the Steering Committee on agency implementation and planning efforts for the Arctic region.

Sec. 5. Engagement with the State of Alaska, Alaska Native Tribal Governments, as well as other United States Stakeholders. It is in the best interest of the Nation for the Federal Government to maximize transparency and promote collaboration where possible with the

State of Alaska, Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations, and local, private-sector, and nonprofit-sector stakeholders. To facilitate consultation and partnerships with the State of Alaska and Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations, the Steering Committee shall:

- (a) develop a process to improve coordination and the sharing of information and knowledge among Federal, State, local, and Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations, and private-sector and nonprofit-sector groups on Arctic issues;
- (b) establish a process to ensure tribal consultation and collaboration, consistent with my memorandum of November 5, 2009 (Tribal Consultation). This process shall ensure meaningful consultation and collaboration with Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations in the development of Federal policies that have Alaska Native implications, as applicable, and provide feedback and recommendations to the Steering Committee;
- (c) identify an appropriate Federal entity to be the point of contact for Arctic matters with the State of Alaska and with Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations to support collaboration and communication; and
- (d) invite members of State, local, and Alaska Native tribal governments and similar Alaska Native organizations, and academic and research institutions to consult on issues or participate in discussions, as appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

Sec. 6. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- (i) the authority granted by law to an executive department, agency, or the head thereof; or
- (ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
January 21, 2015.



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