**Arctic Policy Act**

**Office of Senator Lisa Murkowski**

**Purpose:** To increase local and indigenous voices in Federal science and policy in the Arctic.

**What does this legislation do?**

This legislation amends the Arctic Research and Policy Act to:

* Add additional indigenous representation to the U.S. Arctic Research Commission;
* Permanently establish the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC); and
* Create two new Advisory bodies to advise the AESC.

**Where did this language come from?**

This bill codifies portions of two Executive Orders:

* Executive Order 13689: Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic (2015)
* Executive Order 13754: Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience (2016)

The bill also includes **new language** establishing an Arctic Advisory Committee, and enabling the establishment of Tribal Advisory Councils to provide input on particular issues or regions in the Arctic.

**Summary**

1. **Add additional indigenous representation to the U.S. Arctic Research Commission:**

The ARPA as amended in 1990 included a single seat on the U.S. Arctic Research Commission (USARC) for an individual “from among indigenous residents of the Arctic who are representative of the needs and interests of Arctic residents and who live in areas directly affected by Arctic resource development.” This legislation will add two additional USARC seats for indigenous residents of the Arctic, bringing the total number of USARC Commissioners to nine, and strike the reference to Arctic resource development to include indigenous Arctic residents who may live in communities not affected, or not yet affected, by resource development in the region.

1. **Permanently establish the Arctic Executive Steering Committee:**

On January 21st, 2015, President Obama signed Executive Order (EO) 13689: Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic. This order established the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC), an Arctic-focused coordinating body at the Deputy Secretary level to coordinate federal research and policymaking in the Arctic. Using language from EO 13689, this legislation will make the AESC permanent through a statutory mandate. This legislation will also update administration of the AESC to recognize the importance of the Arctic to the nation’s security. The Secretary of Homeland Security will chair the AESC, with the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy serving as Vice-Chair.

1. **Create two new Advisory bodies to advise the Arctic Executive Steering Committee:**
   1. *Bering Sea Regional Tribal Advisory Group*

On December 9th, 2016, President Obama signed Executive Order (EO) 13754: Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience. This order established a Northern Bering Sea Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council to advise the AESC on issues affecting Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait communities. EO 13754 was rescinded in April of 2017. Using language from EO 13754, this legislation directs the AESC to establish a Bering Sea Regional Tribal Advisory Group composed of elected officials representing regional Alaska Native Tribal governments for the purpose of providing input and recommendations to the AESC on activities, regulations, guidance, the incorporation of traditional knowledge, or policies that may affect actions or conditions in the Northern Bering Sea and the Bering Strait. This legislation also enables the AESC to establish additional regional Tribal advisory groups as appropriate, to provide input and recommendations on specific issues or regions of the Arctic.

* 1. *Arctic Advisory Committee*

In order to ensure that the voices of Arctic communities are included in the development of federal policies or priorities affecting the Arctic region at large, this legislation directs the AESC to establish an Arctic Advisory Committee composed of members representing eight Arctic regions: Arctic Slope, North West Arctic, Norton Sound, Interior, Yukon-Kuskokwim, Bristol Bay, the Aleutian Islands, and the Pribilof Islands. Members shall be appointed by the Chair of the AESC, and must have sufficient experience and expertise in the Arctic region. The Chair is enabled to add three at-large members, and two members from outside the state of Alaska. The Arctic Advisory Committee will be tasked with advising the AESC on Federal Arctic policies, including existing Arctic policies and Arctic policies that are under consideration.