

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1562

To provide for a study and report on research on the United States Arctic Ocean and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 3, 2009

Mr. BEGICH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To provide for a study and report on research on the United States Arctic Ocean and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Arctic Ocean Research
5 and Science Policy Review Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The United States is an Arctic nation
9 with—

1 (A) an approximately 700-mile border with
2 the Arctic Ocean;

3 (B) more than 100,000,000 acres of land
4 above the Arctic Circle; and

5 (C) an even broader area defined as Arctic
6 by temperature which includes the Bering Sea
7 and Aleutian Islands.

8 (2) The Arctic region of the United States—

9 (A) is home to an indigenous population
10 which has subsisted for millennia on the abun-
11 dance in marine mammals, fish, and wildlife,
12 many of which are unique to the region;

13 (B) is known to the indigenous population
14 as Inuvikput or the “place where we live”; and

15 (C) has produced more than
16 16,000,000,000 barrels of oil and, according to
17 the United States Geological Survey, may hold
18 an additional 30,000,000,000 barrels of oil and
19 220,000,000,000,000 cubic feet of natural gas,
20 making the region of fundamental importance
21 to the national interest of the United States.

22 (3) Temperatures in the United States Arctic
23 region have warmed by 3 to 4 degrees Celsius over
24 the past half-century, a rate of increase that is twice
25 the global average.

1 (4) The Arctic ice pack is rapidly diminishing
2 and thinning, and the National Oceanic and Atmos-
3 pheric Administration estimates the Arctic Ocean
4 may be ice free during summer months in as few as
5 30 years.

6 (5) Such changes to the Arctic region are hav-
7 ing a significant impact on the indigenous people of
8 the Arctic, their communities and ecosystems, as
9 well as the marine mammals, fish, and wildlife upon
10 which they depend.

11 (6) Such changes are opening new portions of
12 the United States Arctic continental shelf to possible
13 development for offshore oil and gas, commercial
14 fishing, marine shipping, and tourism.

15 (7) Existing Federal research and science advi-
16 sory programs focused on the environmental and so-
17 cioeconomic impacts of a changing Arctic Ocean lack
18 a cohesive, coordinated, and integrated approach and
19 are not adequately coordinated with State, local, and
20 private sector Arctic Ocean research programs.

21 (8) The lack of research integration and syn-
22 thesis of findings of Arctic Ocean research has im-
23 peded the progress of the United States and inter-
24 national community in understanding climate change

1 impacts and feedback mechanisms in the Arctic
2 Ocean.

3 (9) An improved scientific understanding of the
4 changing Arctic Ocean is critical to the development
5 of appropriate and effective regional, national, and
6 global climate change adaptation strategies.

7 **SEC. 3. UNITED STATES ARCTIC OCEAN DEFINED.**

8 In this Act, the term “United States Arctic Ocean”
9 means the United States zone of the Chukchi and Beau-
10 fort seas north of Cape Prince of Wales, Alaska.

11 **SEC. 4. STUDY OF THE UNITED STATES ARCTIC OCEAN.**

12 (a) STUDY.—Not later than 120 days after the date
13 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce
14 shall request that the National Research Council conduct
15 a study on the existing research and research advisory en-
16 tities of the United States Arctic Ocean. Such study
17 shall—

18 (1) include a review of the breadth, relation-
19 ship, and overlap of existing research programs and
20 research advisory entities engaged in or advising on
21 United States Arctic Ocean research, including re-
22 search related to any coastal or atmospheric re-
23 search of United States Arctic Ocean, including the
24 operating budgets of such entities;

1 (2) assess the gaps in the research and research
2 programs referred to in paragraph (1) and in the co-
3 ordination, integration, and synthesis of research ac-
4 tivities and research data;

5 (3) assess existing scientific information and
6 identify additional information necessary, including
7 local and traditional knowledge, to ensure adequate
8 Federal agency environmental reviews;

9 (4) recommend a comprehensive strategy—

10 (A) to develop priorities for, and coordina-
11 tion, integration, and synthesis of, research and
12 monitoring carried out on United States Arctic
13 Ocean; and

14 (B) to coordinate and integrate such re-
15 search with pan-Arctic research; and

16 (5) provide a comprehensive, 10- to 20-year
17 long-range United States Arctic Ocean research and
18 monitoring plan with applied emphasis on climate
19 impacts, adaption, including response to coastal in-
20 undation issues, resource management, ecosystem
21 function, marine transportation, pollution, ocean
22 acidification, and coastal and offshore oil and gas
23 development, including cold water oil spill response
24 and marine mammal noise issues.

1 (b) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Commerce
2 shall consult with the heads of other agencies and depart-
3 ments of the United States with appropriate Arctic science
4 expertise or regulatory responsibilities in preparing the
5 specifications for the study requested under subsection
6 (a).

7 **SEC. 5. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.**

8 (a) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT.—Not later than 18
9 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
10 Secretary of Commerce shall submit to Congress a report
11 on the study described in section 4(a). Such report shall
12 include—

13 (1) a description of the findings of such study;

14 (2) the recommendations of the National Re-
15 search Council to improve the coordination, integra-
16 tion, and synthesis of current Arctic research activi-
17 ties and research data; and

18 (3) a prioritized and scalable research plan for
19 the United States Arctic Ocean that is arranged the-
20 matically and includes budget estimates for research
21 under such plan.

22 (b) INTERIM REPORTS.—Not less frequently than
23 once every 180-day period until the report described in
24 subsection (a) is submitted, the Secretary of Commerce

1 shall submit to Congress a report on the progress made
2 to carry out the study described in section 4(a).

3 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Admin-
5 istrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-
6 istration \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2010 to carry out this
7 Act.

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