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PNWER Resolution: More funding needed for Arctic economic analysis

As the US Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) collects comment on its Arctic Research Plan FY2017-2021, which outlines Federal priorities for Arctic research, the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER) is submitting a resolution calling for increased funding for economic research to benefit Arctic residents.

The research priorities outlined in the Arctic Research Plan largely focus on understanding the environmental effects climate change will have on the Arctic and people who live there. Programs and research priorities that address residents' health and well-being are also pieces of the overall plan.

In its resolution, PNWER calls for additional funding for economic research in the Arctic, including community economic modeling to determine local workforce needs, for research to gauge the unique and high cost of living in the Arctic and to understand the impact that both climate change and associated adaptation projects, policies and programs will have on economic growth in Arctic communities, along with other priorities listed in the resolution.

“The Arctic landscape and its various ecosystems will feel an outsized effect from climate change and these are critical research topics. The economic challenges faced by Arctic residents are just as significant and require similar attention to make sure their communities are healthy and resilient,” said Matt Morrison, executive director of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region.

Economic challenges provide serious threats to many Arctic communities. Isolation, high living expenses, the high cost of access to energy and a lack of infrastructure make poverty a widespread and persistent problem in the North.

“Building a sustainable Arctic economy is a tenet of the US-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership. PNWER’s mission is similar; to enhance economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region, while maintaining our natural environment,” said Dan Ashton, MLA for Penticton, British Columbia and PNWER president. “Through this resolution, PNWER is encouraging federal research to include analysis on sustainable economic development in the Arctic to support communities there.”

About PNWER

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) is a statutory public/private non-profit created in 1991 by Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Yukon and the Northwest Territories.



Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER)

Increasing funding for Economic Modeling in the Arctic RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) is a statutory public/private non-profit created in 1991 by Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Washington and the Canadian provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Yukon and the Northwest Territories with a mission of increasing the economic well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the region, while maintaining and enhancing the natural environment, as well as electing several PNWER presidents from its Arctic jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, responsible renewable and nonrenewable development industries are important in PNWER's Arctic jurisdictions, by supporting their communities and economies with primary and secondary jobs and also support of PNWER's non-arctic jurisdictions through purchasing of heavy equipment, supplies, labor and professional services in engineering, software, maintenance, food services, telecommunication security and agriculture; and

WHEREAS, isolation and environmental challenges, high living expenses, high cost of access to energy and lack of infrastructure make poverty and a lack of economic opportunity a serious problem in many Arctic communities, inhibiting development of a diversified economy, jeopardizing their sustainability and continued existence; and

WHEREAS, sustainable economic development can enhance the safety and security for the people of the region, which needs to be one of many priorities to sustain the diverse cultures of northern peoples and natural resources from competing outside interests; and

WHEREAS, the United States has invested in environmental data collection and modeling for "adaptive and resilient communities", and needs to continue those

investments while increasing funding for research related to the economic potential for Arctic regions, while incorporating research from people of the Arctic; and

WHEREAS, economic modeling includes population and demographic forecasting to determine local needs; business structural analysis to understand economic flows; cost analysis to determine the unique cost of living characteristics in Arctic regions; input-output modeling to look at primary and secondary ripple effects of employment, purchasing, fiscal impacts, and leakages from the regions; cost-benefit analysis to more fully understand the overall impacts of programs; policy and projects in the North, and occupational modeling to look at maximizing benefits of development by matching the local supply of labor with demand; and

WHEREAS, Several major projects related to natural resource development, expansion of military bases and construction of deep water ports in the North American Arctic lead to economic benefits by offering jobs and training for community members and dual use infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership dated March 10, 2016 supports sustaining the resilience of Arctic communities and building a sustainable Arctic economy, in part by basing development decisions related to Arctic shipping, fishing, and oil & gas exploration and development on scientific evidence; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: PNWER strongly encourages increased funding from our federal governments for localized economic research, surveys and modeling, and building of models at multiple scales, including subnational, national and international scales; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Federally funded Arctic research should include socioeconomic analysis as well as environmental analysis when designing and developing community infrastructure and other major projects.