



CHARTER
of the
Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea
Climate Resilience Area

A. Establishment

Section 4 of Executive Order 13754¹ established the Task Force on the Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area (Bering Task Force) under the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC), which was itself established pursuant to Executive Order 13689. The Bering Task Force is co-chaired by the Department of the Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

In addition to establishing the Bering Task Force, Executive Order 13754 –

- created the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area (NBSCRA);
- reaffirms that Arctic environmental stewardship is in the national interest;
- commits the United States to confront the challenges of a changing Arctic by working to conserve Arctic biodiversity; support and engage Alaska Native tribes; incorporate traditional knowledge into decisionmaking; and build a sustainable Arctic economy that relies on the highest safety and environmental standards, including adherence to national climate goals;
- commits the United States to achieve these goals in partnership with Indigenous communities and through science-based decisionmaking; and
- recognizes that these communities possess a unique understanding of the Arctic ecosystem, and that their traditional knowledge should serve as an important resource to inform Federal decisionmaking.

Executive Order 13754 also establishes the policy of the United States to enhance the resilience of the Northern Bering Sea region by conserving the region's ecosystem, including those natural resources that provide important cultural and subsistence value and services to the people of the region, and calls upon all agencies charged with regulating, overseeing, or conducting activities

¹ Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area, Executive Order No. 13754, 81 Fed. Reg. 90,669 (Dec. 14, 2016). President Biden reinstated Executive Order No. 13753 by means of Executive Order No. 13990, 86 Fed. Reg. 7043 (Jan. 20, 2021).

in the NBSCRA to do so with attention to the rights, needs, and knowledge of Alaska Native tribes; the delicate and unique ecosystem; the protection of marine mammals, fish, seabirds, and other wildlife; and with appropriate coordination with the State of Alaska.

B. Membership

Pursuant to Executive Order 13754, membership of the Bering Task Force includes, in addition to the Co-Chairs, representatives from the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, the National Science Foundation, and such agencies and offices as the co-chairs may designate.

Other agencies and offices that the co-chairs may designate include, but are not limited to, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Energy, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the Marine Mammal Commission. The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy is a member of the Task Force and performs the roles set forth in Section D, below. Membership in the Task Force may also include, but not be limited to, other components of the Executive Office of the President, such as the National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the White House Council on Native American Affairs. The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee may also participate in the Task Force.

C. Functions of the Bering Task Force

To advance United States policy in the NBSCRA, Executive Order 13754 provides basic roles and responsibilities for the Bering Task Force, consistent with the authorities and responsibilities of its member agencies:

- (i) establish and provide regular opportunities to consult with the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council (TAC);
- (ii) coordinate activities of member agencies, including regulatory, policy, and research activities, affecting the NBSCRA and its value for subsistence and cultural purposes;
- (iii) consider the need for additional actions or strategies to advance the policies and provide recommendations, as appropriate, to the President through the AESC;
- (iv) consider and make recommendations with respect to the impacts of shipping on the NBSCRA; and
- (v) in developing and implementing recommendations, coordinate or consult as appropriate with existing AESC working groups, the State of Alaska, regional and local governments, Alaska Native Tribal governments, Alaska Native corporations and organizations, the private sector, other relevant organizations, and academia.

The Task Force may also perform such other functions that are consistent with Executive Order 13754 and other applicable laws and Executive directives as the co-chairs may determine.²

D. Role of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP):

- (i) provides overall policy guidance to the Bering Task Force on behalf of the Executive Office of the President;
- (ii) supports the work of the Bering Task Force;
- (iii) convenes meetings of the Bering Task Force; and
- (iv) facilitates coordination, coordination or consultation, as appropriate, with existing AESC working groups, the State of Alaska, regional and local governments, Federally recognized Tribes, Tribal consortia, Alaska Native corporations, Indigenous organizations, the private sector, other relevant organizations, and academia.

The co-chairs may appoint an executive secretary of the Task Force to undertake such duties as the co-chairs may determine.

E. Relationship Between the Bering Task Force and the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council

The Task Force and the TAC will work in partnership to address issues affecting the NBSCRA, consistent with the policy of the United States to recognize and value the participation of Alaska Native Tribal governments in decisions affecting the NBSCRA, and with the unique government-to-government relationship between the Federal Government and federally recognized Tribes. The Task Force will incorporate Indigenous Knowledge in its work relating to the NBSCRA in accordance with Federal policy and will be guided by input from the TAC in doing so. Pursuant to Section 6 of Executive Order 13754, the Task Force and the TAC will pursue the collaboration and co-production of knowledge as fundamental aspects of their partnership.³

² See, e.g., Tackling Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad, Exec. Order No. 14008, 86 Fed. Reg. 19 (Feb. 1, 2021); National Strategy for the Arctic Region, WHITEHOUSE.GOV (Oct. 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/National-Strategy-for-the-Arctic-Region.pdf>; Ocean Climate Action Plan, WHITEHOUSE.GOV (Mar. 2023), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Ocean-Climate-Action-Plan_Final.pdf.

³ Exec. Order No. 13754, §5(b), 6. See also, Memorandum from Council on Env't Quality to Heads of Fed. Dep'ts & Agencies, Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge, EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (Nov. 30, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf>;

F. Determination

I hereby determine that the roles and responsibilities of the Bering Task Force as set forth in this Charter are in the public interest in connection with the performance of duties imposed on the Executive Branch by law, and that such duties can best be performed through the coordinated actions of such a group.

Approved:



The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.
Deputy Director for Climate and the Environment
White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

April 1, 2024

Date

Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation to Nation Relationships, WHITEHOUSE.GOV (Jan. 26, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/26/memorandum-on-tribal-consultation-and-strengthening-nation-to-nation-relationships/>; Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government, Exec. Order No. 13985, 86 Fed. Reg. 7009 (Jan. 25, 2021); Revitalizing Our Nation's Commitment to Environmental Justice for All, Exec. Order No. 14096, 88 Fed. Reg. 25,251 (April 21, 2023).