

READOUT OF THE NORTHERN BERING SEA CLIMATE RESILIENCE AREA (NBSCRA) JOINT BERING FEDERAL TASK FORCE AND BERING INTERGOVERNMENTAL TRIBAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

April 19, 2024

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy convened a joint meeting between The Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area (Bering Task Force) and the Bering Sea Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council (Tribal Advisory Council or TAC) on April 19, 2024. The hybrid meeting included participants who gathered in Washington, D.C., and participants who joined virtually from multiple venues including Alaska and the D.C. metro region.

David Balton, Executive Director of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee, chaired the meeting. The Task Force was led by co-chairs: Raina Thiele, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Alaska Affairs & Strategic Priorities, Department of the Interior; Kelly Kryc, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce; and Tasha Hippolyte, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Trade, Department of Homeland Security.

In addition to the co-chairs, Task Force membership includes representation by numerous Federal agencies and components of the Executive Office of the President.

The Tribal Advisory Council was established in April, 2022 through a partnership of the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), Kawerak Inc., the Bering Sea Elders Group (BSEG), and the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island. Representation includes over 70 Tribes from the Northern Bering Sea region. The TAC was led in this meeting by its three co-chairs, Fred Phillip, Chief of the Native Village of Kwigillingok, Vivian Korthuis, Chief Executive Officer of the Association of Village Council Presidents, and Charlie Brown, President of the Chinik Eskimo Community.

The Task Force and the TAC work in partnership to address issues affecting the NBSCRA, consistent with Executive Order 13754 and with the government-to-government relationship between the Federal government and federally recognized Tribes, as well as the Administration's larger efforts to prioritize knowledge-informed decision-making and engagement with Indigenous Peoples. The Task Force and TAC Task Force consider collaboration and co-production of knowledge as fundamental aspects of their partnership. The meeting included a training on Alaska Native history, culture, and ways of working in relationship; a discussion of shipping issues and disaster preparedness in the Northern Bering Sea region; and a commitment to work together.