



HAND-DELIVERED

August 2, 2016

Governor Bill Walker
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker:

From the outset of your term, you have faced a series of monumental decisions, and we've greatly appreciated the leadership and commitment you've shown in addressing some of Alaska's most vexing issues.

The issue of climate change, however, has largely been eclipsed by fiscal and other matters. Yet of all the issues facing Alaska, none presents a more compelling threat to our Alaskan lifestyles and economies than rapid climate change.

In just the past year, Lower Cook Inlet has experienced unprecedented changes, including widespread sea star wasting disease; largescale die-offs of common murrelets, sea otters and clams; never-before-seen levels of toxic algae; a devastating infestation of spruce aphids; and record-breaking air and water temperatures.

These changes are already impacting our people. For example, commercial fishermen and Native subsistence harvesters are reporting salmon running deeper than usual – beyond their nets – to escape warmer surface water temperatures. These and other incidences are not anomalies, but rather the trends predicted by scientists as our climate rapidly changes.

We were extremely disappointed when Governor Parnell let the Climate Change Sub-Cabinet die with no public discussion, and when his ADEC rejected our request to start a basic greenhouse gas reporting system in Alaska.

Today, Alaska remains flat-footed on the climate front, despite the fact we face the most significant climate impacts in the United States.

(over)

Now, however, we have a unique opportunity to kick-start the essential conversations needed to ensure Alaska navigates – and perhaps even capitalizes – on our changing landscape.

On July 18, the State of Alaska joined the U.S. Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency in announcing a proposed Clean Air Act settlement against Tesoro-Alaska for violations at its Nikiski refinery.

As part of that proposed settlement, Alaska will receive \$1.3 million. As Alaska continues to grapple with its fiscal crisis, this windfall provides a one-time opportunity to hire a Climate Change Coordinator and to reinvigorate the Climate Change Sub-Cabinet for at least the next five years.

The other alternative for the Tesoro settlement funds would be for Alaska to simply absorb the money into its existing programs, and to continue business-as-usual ignoring the ever-growing realities of a changing climate.

As our fiscal crisis deepens, and our Legislature remains mired in inaction, you have an opportunity to diversify Alaska's economy by investing in Alaska's world class tidal, wind, geothermal and hydropower resources that will create new jobs and economies to make Alaska a leader addressing climate change and ocean acidification.

But as one climate commentator noted in a nod to our nation's pastime: "Nature bats last, and she always bats .1000."

The time to act is now, if not for us, then for our kids. And we need your leadership.

Thank you and I hope we can meet in the near future to discuss this important matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Shavelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "B" and "S".

Bob Shavelson
Inletkeeper