

**ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE * GWICH'IN STEERING COMMITTEE *
NATIVE VILLAGE OF POINT HOPE * OCEANA * PACIFIC ENVIRONMENT
* THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY * WORLD WILDLIFE FUND**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 16, 2009

New Government Report: “Alaska is warming at twice the rate of the rest of the nation”

A team of top government scientists today released a report with definitive evidence that Alaska is the feeling the impacts of climate change more severely than any other region of the United States. In Alaska, America’s Arctic is the “most vulnerable of all to the impacts of warming.” The report, [Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States](#), brings together peer-reviewed scientific data from 500 existing studies on both current impacts from climate change and projected future impacts across the nation.

One of nine regions in the report, Alaska could see temperature increases of as much as 13 degrees Fahrenheit in the next 50 years. As a result of these rising temperatures, the sea ice in the Arctic Ocean could be gone in summertime within this century – which would be devastating to already-stressed species such as ice seals and the threatened polar bear, and the Alaska Native communities that depend on them. Further, ocean acidification caused by emissions of carbon dioxide will affect the Arctic seas more rapidly than other regions and could cause fundamental changes to the Arctic marine environment.

In addition, fisheries in the Bering Sea are already seeing major declines as a result of melting sea ice. These fisheries produce billions of dollars worth of seafood every year. Current proposals for oil and gas development could add further stress to these fragile, unique ecosystems.

People who live in North Slope, Interior and Bering Sea communities are already dealing with these impacts. Representatives from these communities, as well as scientists who have studied the region, will hold a telepress conference tomorrow to describe these impacts in human terms and discuss measures that must be taken to minimize them.

WHAT: Telepress conference with scientists and community members on climate change’s impacts to the Arctic and Bering Sea

WHO: Sarah James, Chair, Gwich’in Steering Committee
Native Village of Point Hope (invited)
Verner Wilson, Program Associate, World Wildlife Fund
Dr. Jeffrey Short, Pacific Science Director, Oceana
Dr. Wendy Loya, Research Ecologist, The Wilderness Society

WHEN: 10 a.m. ADT/11 a.m. PDT/2 p.m. EDT, Wednesday, June 17

HOW: 866-394-1480, Conference ID #15692420

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