

**Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat**  
**Arctic Science Ministerial**  
**September 27, 2016**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am Sayers Tuzroyluk, President of Voice of the Arctic Iñupiat, or V-O-A-I. VOAI is a 501(c)4 corporation that represents 20 Iñupiat entities on the North Slope of Alaska. These organizations include tribes, city governments and Alaska Native Corporations.

The purpose of Voice is to provide local advocacy and engagement for the Iñupiat to state, federal and international forums addressing Arctic issues; to promote an understanding of the North Slope economy within the region and encourage culturally responsible development for economic sustainability; to develop local content and responses with respect to activities within our region that allow for protection of our land, waters and subsistence resources; to act to protect the interests of the Inupiat; to become the local knowledge center for our communities and people regarding developments in the Arctic Slope region; and to be the conduit for information transfer with outside organizations, including both governmental and non-governmental entities.

Evidence of Arctic change is undeniable – everyone in the world wants to do something about it but we are asking you to understand it with us. We see the changes that are occurring every day; the permafrost is thawing, less sea ice and more coastal erosion. The Arctic is what we were born into, where we live and where we thrive. We desire to understand change as much as everyone, but first we approach the change through adaptation and resiliency. That said it is important to understand that we can't compromise our economy and subsistence in the process. Include us but don't treat us

Member Organizations

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Arctic Slope Native Association	City of Anaktuvuk Pass	City of Point Hope	Native Village of Atqasuk	Olgoonik Corporation
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation	City of Atqasuk	City of Wainwright	Native Village of Point Lay	Tikigaq Corporation
Atqasuk Corporation	City of Barrow	Ilisaġvik College	North Slope Borough	Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation
	City of Kaktovik	Kaktovik Iñupiat Corporation	Nunamuit Corporation	Wainwright Tribal Council

or our region as victims. The causes of climate change didn't start in the Arctic – and shutting down our economy isn't going to reverse this change.

Preservation of the Arctic in the long-term impacts our communities in the near-term, and that concerns us. We encourage that, through this Ministerial, there is a balance between global goals and local needs. What differentiates us from everyone else is that local needs **ARE** the Arctic - it's our home.

Overall, VOAI supports the four themes of the Ministerial.

Theme 1 – Arctic Science Challenges and their Regional and Global Implications. We need to ensure that the Iñupiat Voice is a participant in the engagement by forming meaningful partnerships. Again, let's not forget about the local perspective and how outcomes and policies may affect our communities.

Theme 2 – Strengthening and Integrating Arctic Observations and Data Sharing.

Incorporation and sharing of local knowledge from local observers – we have been observers of our environment for over ten thousand years and our knowledge of the environment has been passed down generationally. We need to be part of the process and included in pre-outcome and policy decisions.

Theme 3 – Applying Expanded Scientific Understanding of the Arctic to Build Regional Resilience and Shape Global Response. Resiliency is critical to our survival and always has been. As Iñupiat, resiliency is part of our culture, however, we have expanded that beyond our culture and we continue to thrive. Resiliency means to strengthen our infrastructure by bringing us into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We have the same infrastructure needs in the Arctic that the rest of the country and the world has, in general, schools for

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our children, health clinics, clean water, clean energy sources and fast communication through fiber. On the North Slope we have addressed and built our current infrastructure; we continue to make investments in these areas. We have to for our own survival. We would like to see the Ministerial have meaningful outcomes in this area.

Theme 4 – Arctic Science as a Vehicle for STEM Education and Citizen Empowerment. Our local businesses and municipal government are very focused on introduction of STEMs programs into our classrooms. We have a very vibrant young population who are very capable. We have seen the passion of our youth and have heard their visions for the future. They want to become doctors and business people in their own village. We have to continue to provide them with the resources to realize their dreams! Using the Ministerial to enhance STEMs in our region would be a critical and welcome component of this body.

Thank you for the time to make a few short comments.

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