



Mr. Brian Deese
Senior Advisor to the President

February 12, 2016

Ms. Christy Goldfuss
Managing Director, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Admiral Robert Papp
U.S. Special Representative for the Arctic

Re: US-Canada Summit: Ensuring Resilience of the Arctic in the Face of Unprecedented Climate Change

Dear Ms. Goldfuss, Admiral Papp, and Mr. Deese:

As Arctic nations, the United States and Canada share responsibility for much of the region's spectacular ecological wealth, unique cultures, and exceptional wildlife populations.

Climate change will continue to bring unprecedented impacts to the ecology of this region of global significance and to Arctic Communities and Indigenous Peoples. The United States and Canada worked in partnership with other nations at COP21 in Paris to reach an historic level of agreement on the need to address climate change.

The upcoming US-Canada summit provides an excellent opportunity to build on that momentum and underline our nations' commitment to ensure that a resilient Arctic remains intact for generations to come, not only to benefit the region but also because of the importance of an intact, sustainable Arctic for the entire globe.

To this end, we urge a joint statement by President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau, in which the two leaders announce that their countries will:

1. Commit at the highest level to strengthen the Arctic Council and its regional governance capacities, in order to achieve coordinated, pan-Arctic management and sustainable development, based on scientific understanding and traditional knowledge about the region's current and future ecosystem services and ecological values, including, for maritime resources, a regional seas agreement subscribed by all Arctic nations.
2. Identify and protect lands and waters of high ecological and cultural value, by:

- a. Permanently safeguarding from commercial extractive and polluting activities specific areas in US and Canadian Arctic oceans that are important for marine ecosystem health, biological productivity, climate resilience, and the food security and culture of indigenous peoples of the North; and
 - b. Working through the Arctic Council to prioritize and accelerate the establishment by all Arctic nations of a network of marine protected areas that spans the Arctic.
3. Permanently power communities throughout our Arctic regions with clean, renewable energy, through establishment of a joint Clean Arctic Energy fund to bring clean renewable energy and efficiencies technologies to Arctic communities and train Arctic residents to install and maintain these new systems.
4. End the threat of oil spills that respect no boundaries and could devastate this fragile and isolated region, with the United States, as a first step, withdrawing its Arctic Outer Continental Shelf from eligibility for future oil and gas leasing and ending seismic exploration there.
5. Ensure that indigenous rights, practices, and understanding are respected and indigenous communities are consulted to the maximum feasible extent in the formulation and implementation of policies and practices – including public and private investment decisions – affecting our respective Arctic lands and waters.
6. Develop an Arctic Climate Change Knowledge Network to monitor and report on the effects of climate change on Arctic communities and study those effects on global climate systems, through:
 - a. A research partnership between Canada’s High Arctic Research Station in Cambridge Bay; and US Arctic Research Commission;
 - b. A program of community monitoring across the region contributing to on-the-ground, real time knowledge to inform local decision-making and economic development.

Our staffs will forward you a briefing paper providing additional detail on how we think these important goals can best be implemented.

Thank you for considering our views. We look forward greatly to a historic and productive meeting between President Obama and Prime Minister Trudeau on March 10th.

Very truly yours,



Rhea Suh
President
Natural Resources Defense Council



Carter Roberts
President and CEO
World Wildlife Fund-US