

CALT Meeting | Policy Statement #1

CALT Participants: Lisa Busch, Denise Michels, Luke Hopkins, Mara Kimmel, Mike Levine

State Participants: Nikoosh Carlo, David Rogers, Alice Edwards,

Public Listeners: Melissa Hefflin (Bering Sea Elders Group), Max Neale (ANTHC)

Nils Andreassen: Today we're talking about policy statement #1. Everyone should have a new version now. I believe the edits came from Molly. Does anything from the public comment or listening session stick out in regards to working with communities?

Mara Kimmel: I'm pretty happy with it. I see two aspects: 1) We need to provide internal capacity for the Administration to sustain the movement and 2) make sure that the Administration is facilitation and assisting local governments, breaking it down further into how local governments can govern (1.1), do research (1.2) and help create planning frameworks (1.3) and enshrining institutional capacity to continue climate change work within Governor's office. I understand the CALT is in place for three years, so I understand that the infrastructure is in place for the Administration to continue this work.

Nikoosh Carlo: You've hit on the issue of finding a way to formalize how things come together in a way that supports the climate leadership team.

Lisa Busch: I really liked the edits, but sometimes I would look at it and think "are these too general?". I'm wondering- when it comes to the action plan for the first goal, what would be examples of actions that you would put into facilitating a strong network of local governance. What do you think we should be thinking about?

Kimmel: I think that if we had an internal Craigslist between towns – those kinds of facilitated conversations as we're moving towards lower emissions and renewables could increase purchasing powers. How can we create the Craigslist approach? That would be my action item more than objective. For 1.1B, one of the things that could happen is if we could create a template MOU between governments, what would shared governance look like around climate change, especially adaptation. You would have some government-to-government contracts about purchasing or sharing services. These already exist around the state.

Busch: That sounds good. We're going to write these ideas down. That's the next step, right?

Nils: We'll develop those ideas more. That's what we'll walk through as part of the next step. I think this policy statement is great. There are a lot of "to"s in here.

Kimmel: The key words here for me are collaboration and capacity. Also talking about the governance capacity to address climate issues. I didn't know how to get around the issue of too many "to's".

Nils: The way that this policy reads outside of this document is the “The State of Alaska will... to ensure...”. I wonder if the policy statement can focus more on collaboration and capacity.

Kimmel: You’re right. Maybe the climate change piece is inherent in what we do.

Mike Levine: I was going to suggest reversing the order of things. I had two other suggestions/questions: 1) is there a reason we don’t include tribal entities with state and local governments 2) the collaboration seems like only part of the action that’s happening here. I’m not sure what the other word is that we need. A bunch of the things under 1.4 aren’t collaboration, they’re action-forcing entities.

Kimmel: Goal 1.4 speaks more to capacity and perpetuating statewide capacity to accomplish this stuff.

Levine: That’s exactly accurate. This isn’t a criticism. If we get rid of the “to ensure climate change action” at the end, we could play with another clause like “enhance collaboration and take action” ‘or “build capacity to ensure”. I don’t have an idea of how to work that idea, but I’d be happy to work to encompass more action.

Busch: Would “sustain” help?

Kimmel: Yes. And as far as your comment about tribes, they are in 1.1 and I consider tribes to be a local government, but I see your point. I think it’s really vital that tribes be mentioned specifically, so however you think that should be more emphasized.

Levine: What about “Enhance collaboration and build and sustain capacity across these...” I think that would be great.

Hopkins: In 1.3 when you talk about communities, you could expand that to make sure we’re talking about tribes.

Nils: In State policy, are there legal/technical/other restraints around the way we use “tribal governments”? I don’t disagree at all with including tribal governments throughout the document, I just don’t know how it plays out in implementation.

Busch: I think we need to include it.

Nils: Any other overarching comments? We’ll work on adjusting policy statement #1 with some of the edits that have been suggested. Thanks, Mara for your edits and for explaining. I think that it leads us towards the next action steps.

Busch: So is the next step brainstorming and incorporating public comment in terms of specific suggestions (ie making a big list) or is that oversimplifying?

Nils: Yes, we’ll review public comment and review the entire draft and come out with a next version. Within that next version, we’ll step into action planning. It will be less of a list of things to do and more of a plan for implementation. A short summary of implementation actions.

Levine: Is it your role to go through the public comment and decide what fits where? How are we addressing that?

Nils: Part of the job is to review public comment. The way I understand the public comment process is that most are pretty generic in that they either support/don't support the policy or specific areas, and some are more specific. I'm going to work with Nikoosh and others on bringing that into the next draft but really staying consistent with what's been done so far. Going to lean on you to see if the next version is consistent with what we've heard and what's been said.

Busch: It'd be helpful if we could see the more specific comments divided by policy statement.

Nils: It could be.

Levine: I read the comments from the Bering Sea Elders, and they have some very specific comments about language that was changed from the earlier version to this one. I don't have a good suggestion, but it would be good to have some way of distilling items that we think warrant additional conversation. I don't think we're obligated to write a response, but I think it's part of our due diligence to make a concerted effort to consider the detailed comments.

Nils: We'll do our best to approach it that way. The more important thing in my mind is the final product. Not about reflecting on where we've been. We'll see what we can do with all of that. I'd suggest that the leadership team bring that into your discussion and reflection on different drafts.

Hopkins: When I look at the public comment, I put my own values view on whether I think it's something that needs to be incorporated as we move forward. We know that we don't have to respond to each public comment, but if there's something that we think is valuable then a CALT member can bring it forward. I think that as many of us as possible can look through these comments and make notes on something that we think should be in the action items or policy statements.

Nils: I think that's how we've approached it throughout. What's in here is from the CALT and the changes will be from the CALT, but the public comment can inform the CALT's approach. Members can advocate for what's important to them.

I can imagine that other members of the CALT have similar questions. I can say that by the end of this week that we'll come up with a sketch for how we approach this and a timetable for moving forward.

Hopkins: Sounds good to me.

Nils: Part of the challenge is timing. The policy went out a month ago, but we've been working on it for the past month so we have these parallel processes. We're already at a different place than what's come in. How do we continue to advance it while paying attention to what's come in. We can come back to that at the end of the week.

Kimmel: We could say “through agreements” to recognize local rights to self-determination through gov-to-gov agreements. I think it’s important that the SOA signal to local communities that we want to work on formal agreements.

Levine: I like that idea. Reggie said that it needs to be a mechanism for accountability. Cooperative agreements sound like a two-way street where the State does its job and communities have to do their part on the other side. Some word like that would be helpful .

Nils: I like that it makes it more functional. Someone’s brought this up that we may need a definition page.

Kimmel: I think that self-determination is a word of art. I don’t know that we need a definition for that, and I worry that we would be treading into legal waters. I do think we should specify that tribes are treated as local government.

Nils: For 1.1C, I would just note that the action plan is through technical support, so some of these actually have a lot of action in them that we can build off of.

1.2 is focused on coordinating research and local government. I know that we moved a portion of it to Policy Statement #4.

Levine: Has it actually been moved?

Nils: Not yet.

[...]

Nils: For 1.2, I think that we want to think about research in terms of collaboration and capacity. 1.2B and 1.2C are really at the heart of it, but we need to think more about what the goal is.

Hopkins: Goal 1.2B really needs to be there, regardless of whether or not the objectives are moved. The aspect of what is described there is really important. We need to state it and maintain it.

Levine: I wonder if one of the things we could do is talk about ensuring that there is effective coordination to effectively develop community plans.

Nils: Some of this could go back in 1.1 or be moved around.

Hopkins: On the call-in session today, USFS member Wayne Owen said that he was on ACCER. Do they put together a report.

Nils: They’re federal, but they include the state.

Nikoosh: Larry’s involved in ACCER and SCOR. I know that he’s been thinking about how these science-related entities and what they all can do. I think that Molly might also be involved.

Alice Edwards: Commissioner Hartig participates as well.

David Rogers: I participated in ACCER meetings for a while. Haven't heard much lately. I think that the concept is to have a way to coordinate federal-state climate change activities.

Alice Edwards: I think that Commissioner Hartig's been coordinating ACCER with USGS.

Nils: 1.3B is similar to 1.3C. I wonder if the goal for 1.3 could be built into 1.1 instead and if we need something different for 1.3, some of which is related to 1.4. It seems like 1.1 is focused on local government and communities and the objectives of 1.3 fit under 1.3.

Levine: If I would break them up, maybe 1.3A goes to 1.1 and 1.3B goes to 1.4. I'm not sure. I wonder if the disconnect would be lessened if 1.2 and 1.3 were switched.

Nils: If we keep the decision-support piece and keep the order, maybe the research piece is the first one focused on capacity-building side and then you move into local government support and capacity building and then you have things that the State can do.

Hopkins: Are you looking at certain objectives? I agree with Mike's comments about moving one up, one down.

Nils: Thinking about 1.2 becoming the current 1.1 and then 1.4 would become 1.3

Levine: I would consider exactly the opposite so that you're going from broad to narrow and also because I think that you'd get some major pushback if you put research ahead of 1.1. The research component is going to overlap with 1.4. This is hard to do in the abstract. We have some wordsmithing issues that Molly and Mara worked on. One suggestion might be to highlight these overlaps or inconsistencies and seeing if they have suggestions on how to solve it rather than doing this iterative editing process.

Nils: It's one of those things where it's gone through so many iterations that we're gonna have reconsiderations about how it's organized. We'll just put some of these questions back out to the group along with some of the notes. Maybe for each of the policy statements, we have a research statement at the end.

Levine: That's a good idea if we included research and capacity needs.

Nils: 1.4 is about how we enshrine this effort in state actions, including a link back to federal activities. It was originally intended as a climate-proofing measure.

Levine: I concur with Luke that having a group is incredibly valuable, but I agree with Nils that we don't need to call it the same thing that we had in in 2009. Would it make sense to say that the Governor should establish a Cabinet-level group.

Nikoosh: I think it's important for the group to think about this aspect of how do we formalize things or how do we want to see things implemented in the future. I think it's a good conversation to have. Personally, I like the discussion of what do we want the role of the group to be and what are they going to do. How will they be most effective.

Nils: Maybe 1.4C should go under the research goal. 1.4D is really about federal, and maybe we can link this back to whatever comes out of a separate document that addresses potential engagement with federal agencies. We're already working on amending the Stafford Act. We can figure that out. Any other final comments?

Hopkins: Something like 1.4D, that's just the Action Item, right?

Nils: Right. That's been part of the problem is that we've had some action items out there that we haven't wanted to lose, so they're either in here right now or their on peoples' minds. As we work on the Action Plan, we can see that come to life.