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February 8, 2022

Dear Members of the Natural Resources Committee, US House of Representatives,

I am writing you to voice my strong support of the Climate Adaptation Science Centers Act (CASC Act). I have served as the university director of the Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center (AK CASC) since its inception, and have watched and participated in the development of the regional and national CASC's capacity to address stakeholder needs and challenges across the country. The CASC's approach of providing regionally specific and state-of-the-science capacity to land, natural, and cultural resource managers has contributed significantly to informing decision making from the local to federal levels.

The regional CASC's represent a partnership between the US Geological Survey and the regional university host. The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) serves as the AK CASC host along with consortia members from the University of Alaska system (University of Alaska Southeast and University of Alaska Anchorage). UAF is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and a national and world leader in climate change and arctic research. Located on the frontline of climate change and climate impacts, our research enterprise has deep expertise and experience in delivering stakeholder-driven actionable science. We deliver science to inform managers in developing sustainable adaptation strategies to address the challenges and opportunities facing the landscapes and peoples of Alaska and the circumpolar North.

The CASC Act, is a draft bill being introduced by Congressman Grijalva of Arizona, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee. Chair Grijalva is holding a hearing on the bill within the committee, on February 17 at 1 pm (EST).

This bill is important for several reasons.

Establishing the CASC's in law will create consistency and continuity of the regional and national CASC's across changes in administrations. Currently, the centers are established by secretarial orders and are vulnerable to being rescinded by any secretary of the interior. Authorization by Congress will provide consistency of research, education, and training programs, as well as continuity in the actionable science and capacity building that the CASC's provide to their partners and collaborators. This is of paramount importance for a region like Alaska, which has 31 communities identified by the GAO as imminently threatened from climate-induced flooding and erosion.

Additionally, the CASC Act will:

- Reinstates the Federal Advisory Committee to better coordinate and inform science across the CASC network.



- Authorize appropriations, which would provide long-term stability of funding for the CASC network.
- Increase flexibility to conduct new research, provide education, mentor students, and work with other agencies and institutions.
- Create consistent and timely grant processing.
- Introduce an evaluation process based on performance, which allows the CASC's to focus on building long-term partnerships.

The CASC Act will allow the CASC program the stability and flexibility to directly address the unmet and growing needs of land, natural, and cultural resource managers. The CASC's provide regionally specific state-of-the science expertise and significant regional capacity building for an informed workforce of government officials and community leaders in America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Scott Rupp". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "R" and a distinct "T".

Dr. T. Scott Rupp
University Director
Professor