

Pat Pitney
Interim President

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February 15, 2022

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
U.S. House of Representatives
Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

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

On behalf of the University of Alaska System, I hereby provide our strong support of the Climate Adaption Science Centers Act (CASC Act). This legislation is critical to the continued advancement of climate adaptation science across the nation as well as establishing programmatic consistency and continuity. As “America’s Arctic University” we are well positioned to inform and assist natural and cultural resource managers navigating the ever-evolving challenges presented by climate change. Being on the frontline of climate change impacts, this work lies at the core of our mission as a public, land-, sea-, and space-grant system of higher education.

The Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center (AK CASC) was the first regional CASC established in 2010 and the University of Alaska has served as host from its beginning. Alaska and the Nation have benefited greatly from the capacity and successes of the CASC’s, which have become key to successful climate adaptation by local, state, and national entities. We support your effort and bill to codify these regional centers, and we are confident that authorization will further the CASC’s capacity to produce actionable science that informs decision making and stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

Since its establishment, the AK CASC has played an important role in training graduate students and postdoctoral fellows that are prepared to tackle the challenges of a changing climate and the impacts to ecosystems and people. Through cutting-edge research and strong partnerships with resource managers and other stakeholders, our research community has delivered regionally specific and highly relevant applied science to understand climate impacts and address the adaptation needs of the region. There has never been a time that Alaska’s need for expertise and solutions has been higher.

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. The University of Alaska wholeheartedly supports this bill and the continued efforts of the CASC program.^[1]_{SEP}

Sincerely,

Pat Pitney
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