



Sitka
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

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Protecting the natural environment
of the Tongass National Forest and
supporting the development of
sustainable communities within
Southeast Alaska

3/20/2024

Attention: Southeast Conference
9360 Glacier Highway, Suite 201
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grant (CPRG) - Letter of collaborative support for the Accelerating Clean Energy Savings in Alaska's Coastal Communities Program (ACES – AK)

Dear Mr. Venables,

On behalf of the Sitka Conservation Society (SCS), please accept this letter of support for an implementation grant application to the Environmental Protection Agency's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program by the Southeast Conference (SEC) and Alaska Heat Smart (AHS). We strongly believe that their *Accelerating Clean Energy Savings in Alaska's Coastal Communities Program* (ACES - AK) will help catalyze critical rural energy improvements, lower homeowners' heating costs, and dramatically reducing carbon emissions.

The Sitka Conservation Society's mission is to protect the natural environment of the Tongass National Forest and develop sustainable communities within Southeast Alaska. The Sitka Conservation Society has a long history of advocating for fish friendly renewable energy development projects in Sitka, Alaska and promoting beneficial electrification initiatives amongst the community. We have conducted workforce development initiatives in collaboration with the City of Sitka, helped increase access to clean energy technology through management of a local carbon offset fund, supported energy conservation education and outreach, and engaged in federal and municipal policy advocacy to help create programs and investments like the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program. We will assist this project by assisting with community outreach and education, providing inroads to the community's potential program applicants, looking to connect local youth to workforce development opportunities and working with the collective impact network of the Sustainable Southeast Partnership to ensure that communities in Southeast Alaska can take advantage of these investments. This EPA program is in line with USDA's Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy approach and would align with the other federal initiatives and investments being made in the region.

SCS believes strongly in the need to decarbonize and lower the costs of space heating. The majority of coastal Alaska's communities are economically disadvantaged. Weighed down by some of the nation's highest heating and electricity costs, many households spend over 50% of their incomes on heat alone. The ACES – AK Program being developed by SEC and AHS will

lower this burden for thousands of lower to modest income coastal Alaska families. With decades of combined experience in the spaces of economic development and beneficial electrification, SEC and AHS are poised to better the lives of Alaska residents while meeting the goals of the CPRG program.

We look forward to this new home energy education and financial incentive program and the Sitka Conservation Society strongly supports the SEC - AHS proposal. We welcome the opportunity to partner with them to serve households along Alaska's coast.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Riley', followed by a long, sweeping checkmark.

Katie Riley
Deputy Director of Policy and Programs
Sitka Conservation Society
katie@sitkawild.org
907-209-2019