

**Statement of Tony Weyiouanna**  
**Bicameral Task Force of Climate Change Forum**  
**January 14, 2014**

My Name is **Tony Weyiouanna** and I am the President of the Board for the Shishmaref Native Corporation.

In Shishmaref, we continue to live our subsistence life style passed on generation to generation for the past 4,000 years. The yearly spring hunt is our main season of hunting for our winter supply of seal oil and dried meat, which is the main staple of our diet. During the spring we hunt bearded seals, walrus and other seals such as the spotted and common seals.

The climate is changing. The hunting season from the past 18 years has been getting much shorter. This year was particularly strange. We saw rain in November and December. Usually, our fishing starts at the end of October, when the lagoon freezes over and we can get to the mainland over the ice. But this year we couldn't fish until mid-December. That means that we have to buy more Western foods – spending more money each month that we can't hunt our own food. Or we have to travel further during those times to try to hunt caribou or other large mammals, which are becoming more rare.

Our hunting seasons are shortening, and so is the lifetime of our infrastructure.

Originally our seawall – designed by Army Corps of Engineers - was supposed to have a 25 year life span. But by the time we built it, because of projections of rising sea level - it was only going to be good for 15 years. Our small island is only 3 miles long, and not the entire island is developable. A sea wall that can't protect our community for more than 15 years is not very useful.

All of our community investments are now faced with a very short timeline, and comes with the question of “how long are we going to use this” before it is no longer useful. We are losing out on jobs and lacking an economic driver because we aren't investing into our own community.

Kids are moving out of the community. Our daughter left 2-3 months ago because there are no jobs, there are no rental housing opportunities. Even we are looking into moving. I've now applied for jobs outside of Shishmaref in order to get us someplace safer. Even though we have a home, we have to move to someplace with economic opportunities.

The shortening winter season is impacting our local subsistence culture and our ability to create jobs and investment for our community. It's attacking us from all sides. We need our government to attack climate change from all sides too – with national and local legislation to help protect our community.