

**Statement of Stanley Tocktoo**  
**Bicameral Task Force of Climate Change Forum**  
**January 14, 2014**

My name is **Stanley Tocktoo** – I am the former mayor and current President of the Village Council of Shishmaref.

A common fear in Shishmaref is becoming the next King Island. King Island was another island in Alaska that lost its whole community to climate change. Its people were evacuated, and its culture lost. We are scared to end up like King Island.

As mayor, one of the biggest challenges we faced was relocation – finding a safe place for our kids to call home. A new site that could offer protection of our culture and traditional values.

We live on an island. Our way to and from the mainland – where we get our food, our supplies – is through our airport. In the past year, one of our major dirt roads was damaged during a storm. There is another dirt road protecting the airport – and the water came very close to it. Based on my experience, the next few storms will lead the sand foundation to leak out around the airport and the runway could collapse. We don't have a plan if the airport were washed out.

It's not just our infrastructure at risk. It's our homes. We are having to put houses on skids so that they are mobile and so that we can move them to a safe area before storms hit. This past year, we had to put 18 houses on these skids, and over 20 were ultimately relocated during the year. This is necessary, because homes are already falling into the water. We lost two homes in 2005 that weren't moved in time.

A lot of our community members are relocating. In serious storms, people are forced to evacuate, and when their houses are destroyed, they are stuck, away from home, and with no way to come home. As people leave and relocate to other places voluntarily, they won't be able to come back. We are losing our culture. We have a warm and communal culture that works together and lives off the land in a subsistence culture. We hunt, and fish, and have traditions that we try to pass on to our children. We will lose that if we are relocated into an area with other people who don't appreciate our way of life.

No matter what your politics, you can't ignore the facts. The facts are that our village is being impacted by climate change on a daily basis. And we need you to do something about it.