

Arctic Futures 2050
Social Implications of Arctic Change: The Case of Shishmaref, Alaska

- *Moderator: Henry Huntington, SEARCH*
- *Panel: Lindsay Solie Jensen, Legislative Assistant, Senator Sullivan (Alaska)*
- *Elizabeth Marino, Oregon State University*
- *Darlene Turner, Village of Shishmaref*

Changing sea ice, land ice, and permafrost have far-reaching effects on Arctic communities, societies, and cultures. But they are not the only matters facing Arctic communities. As the case of Shishmaref, Alaska, will illustrate, community well-being is interconnected with environmental integrity, social well-being, cultural vitality, supportive policies, education, health, justice, and more. Shishmaref has received world-wide attention as a prime example of the perils of climate change, as warming permafrost and reduced sea ice leave the shoreline exposed to the brunt of fall and winter storms and far less resistant to erosion. Houses have already been lost, crucial infrastructure is threatened, and the townsite is not likely to last. Shishmaref's story on one hand is well known, thanks to all the attention it has received. In other ways, however, the full story has been obscured or ignored. Arctic change is not happening in a vacuum, and policy approaches that single out climate change are unlikely to succeed or to help Arctic peoples. At the interface of culture, science, and policy, sustained engagement is necessary for those in each sector to understand not just the basics of their counterparts' worlds, but also the details of what matters to local residents, what science can and cannot say, and how policies are created amid a clamor of competition for attention and conflicting views of what can and should be done. Panelists will discuss what can be done to foster that level of engagement and how it can make a difference.