

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery
14th Meeting of the Arctic Council
Eric Carlson, U.S. Senior Arctic Official

Mr. Chair, fellow Senior Arctic Officials, Permanent Participant heads of delegation, Working Group representatives, Observers, and guests, good morning from Washington, D.C. I am Eric Carlson, the Senior Arctic Official for the United States. It's an honor for me to join you virtually for this 14th meeting of the Arctic Council.

I would like to echo what several others have said. The United States is committed to a safe, secure, and prosperous Arctic, and the Arctic Council is indispensable to this vision. I want to commend Norway for its leadership these last two years as the Council's Chair, particularly our colleague Morten for his exceptional and tireless efforts to strengthen the Council in his role as Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials during a period of tension and challenge stemming from conflict outside the region. We recognize the Council has been a central tool for advancing our collective safety and prosperity in the Arctic for nearly 30 years since its founding. I'd also like to recognize the Working Groups, which continue to be the vital engine of the Council's work and whose activities materially benefit the Arctic region and its inhabitants.

I especially want to highlight the Council's ongoing work on wildland fires in the Arctic. The Norwegian Chair and Gwich'in Council International in particular deserve praise for all they've done to establish the Wildland Fires Initiative, which has helped promote the importance of addressing this growing threat. We look forward to continuing this work across Working Groups, as this issue deeply affects the safety and livelihoods of our communities across the Arctic.

In closing, I heartily welcome the Kingdom of Denmark's tenure as the next Chair of the Arctic Council. We are confident that the Kingdom will further enhance the Arctic Council as the preeminent forum for Arctic cooperation.