Changes in the Arctic Environment
AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

May 20-22, 2009
Seward, Alaska
CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Arctic Ocean is largely surrounded by Canada, Denmark (Greenland), Norway (Svalbard), Russia and the United States (Alaska). In addition, Finland, Iceland and Sweden are considered Arctic states and these eight countries, along with indigenous peoples’ organisations in the Arctic, form the Arctic Council. The Arctic Ocean has largely been covered by ice throughout the year but the ice is melting rapidly. Changes in the Arctic environment bring opportunities for investigation and exploitation of natural resources in the region as well as challenges for the protection of the Arctic marine environment and biodiversity. These challenges and opportunities raise stimulating questions about policy questions and the applicable legal regime. Much guidance is found in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea which provides a comprehensive set of rules for the world’s oceans, including the Arctic. A Conference on “Changes in the Arctic Environment and the Law of the Sea” will be held May 20-22, 2009 in Seward, Alaska. The primary sponsors are the Center for Oceans Law and Policy at the University of Virginia School of Law (COLP) and the Law of the Sea Institute of Iceland while associate co-sponsors are the U. S. Arctic Research Commission, the Seward Marine Center of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and the Law of the Sea Institute at Roat Hall, University of California, Berkeley.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The speakers include foremost experts on legal as well as scientific aspects of the unique Arctic environment. Conference panels cover existing claims and the political setting, scientific background, marine transport, passage routes, environment and biodiversity, living resources, continental shelves, offshore petroleum and Svalbard.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

While existing international law provides a useful governing regime, specific application to the Arctic Ocean is still developing. The topics examined will be of interest to environmentalists, lawyers, government officials, resource users, vessel owners and operators, enforcement officers and academics.

CONFERENCE LOCATION

Seward, Alaska is a port for both commercial and US Coast Guard vessels engaged in the Arctic Ocean. The Seward Marine Center’s auditorium will be the venue for the Conference in an appropriate local setting on the ocean harbor. Hotel accommodations can be viewed at the COLP website www.virginia.edu/colp/annual conference.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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