

ALASKA

PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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March 20, 2021

RE: APHA Support for HB 128

Dear Honorable House Finance Committee Members:

The Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) was founded in 1969 and is organized as a 501(c)6. APHA is a trade association representing Alaska's hunting guides and promoting conservation of Alaska's wildlife resources. APHA promotes industry professionalism, land stewardship, community and public relations and advocates for continued access to state and federal public lands. As an example, APHA put its boots on the ground while ANILCA was being drafted to ensure access to federal conservation units would continue and rural economic opportunities would be maintained.

More recently APHA has begun sponsoring youth essay contests to promote interest in wildlife conservation, enforcement or becoming a hunting guide. APHA has also worked to promote the Alaska Native Hospital in Anchorage's traditional food program to the benefit of elders in long-term care. APHA also promotes governor tags by auctioning a few each year (financial proceeds benefit ADFG) and by working to match guide trip donations to other conservation organizations efforts to add value to their offering and bring in more money for conservation efforts. The APHA holds a charitable gaming permit and we use this permit to offer raffles and raise money for all of these various efforts in partnership with the State of Alaska.

The APHA is grateful for the statutory and regulatory leeway afforded us during the pandemic to not just advertise our raffles but actually sell tickets online. Because the pandemic forced us to cancel our in-person banquet this year, these rule suspensions were especially valuable, all our programs remained viable through the pandemic. Looking forward we see the need to modernize Alaska's statutes and explicitly allow online sales. As important as online sales is the reduction in administrative workload and mitigation of liability. The APHA works hard to keep administrative staff to a minimum and push its resources into the group mission. HB 128, as written, would diminish the potential value of our raffles while increasing administrative burden and liability.

The APHA suggests the following changes:

- *Eliminate the requirement for a purchaser to be a resident of the State of Alaska*
- *Eliminate the requirement that the raffle licensee verify the age and location of the purchaser*
- *Eliminate the prohibition on sales to people located out of state*
- *For internet sales, the purchaser (and not licensee) will verify:*
 - *That the individual is of legal age to purchase the raffle ticket*
 - *That the individual resides in a state where the purchase of a raffle ticket is not prohibited*
- *Clarify that any such raffle governed by this bill does occur within the state of Alaska and the winner is determined in the State of Alaska*

The APHA's members graciously are willing to donate their trips to us and other Alaskan non-profits to raise money for conservation. The gross price and market size for these value-added tours is significantly more if non-residents can purchase tickets. This would be true for any donated Alaskan tour whether it be a hunt or a scenic flight or bear viewing adventure. We hope the legislature will help level the playing field with out-of-state non-profits and help Alaskan charities realize of donated visitor experiences. Alaska is a world class visitor destination, absent adoption of the above changes the tourism non-profits whose market is out-of-state will become a disadvantaged sector.

Sincerely,



Sam Rohrer
President