

ALASKA

PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Representative Andy Josephson

RE: Support of HCR 23

Dear Representative Josephson,

Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) is in full support of House Concurrent Resolution 23 (HCR 23).

APHA is a statewide association representing Alaska's hunting guide industry. In 2015, APHA partnered with Safari Club International to commission The McDowell Group to report on *"The Economic Importance of Hunters Visiting Alaska- Alaska's Guided Hunting Industry 2015."* We are pleased to report that our industry brought \$52.5 million **new** dollars to Alaska's economy, while directly employing 1,550 people. Alaska's guide businesses are Alaskan owned, according to the Department of Commerce and Economic Development, fully 86% of the active registered guides are resident Alaskan's. The link between new dollars and Alaska ownership is clearly demonstrated by the \$37.5 million dollars that Alaska's hunting guide industry spent with Alaskan businesses. Alaska's hunting guide industry is an important economic engine for Alaska.

Alaska is unique. We have vast wild lands, healthy native populations of game and constitutionally embedded public ownership of our fish and game. Our members provide professional and safe accompaniment for visitors wishing to hunt big game in Alaska's remote and perilous wilderness. We are completely dependent on Alaska's wildlife for our livelihoods. It's because of this dependence on wildlife that APHA is first and foremost a wildlife conservation organization. We work hard to advocate for proactive and foresighted wildlife management policies, HCR 23 is precisely that.

Alaska used to be more unique. Until this Tuesday (March 13, 2018) our wild sheep and goats had never tested positive for any disease directly attributed to domestic animals. We are deeply troubled and saddened by the news that four Dall sheep in the Talkeetna mountains and two mountain goats on the Kenai tested positive for a deadly foreign pathogen. Sadly, our colleagues in the other western states tell us of catastrophic die offs and decades of lost hunting opportunity as their states confront terrible die offs directly attributed to Movi. Alaska is getting less unique all the time, we are deeply concerned about the news that a deadly disease was discovered directly adjacent to the center of agriculture in Alaska.

Alaska's hunting guides strongly support proactive polices to prevent transmission of disease to our wild animals. Alaska's wilderness and our wild fish and wildlife make us unique, it seems

that we get less unique and more common every day. Thank you for sponsoring HCR 23, we only wish that these pro-active policies were put in place sooner. APHA stands with you in your efforts to prevent disease transmission to Alaska's wildlife. After all, it's not sheep and goat farms that make us special, those are common all over the world, it's our native fish and wildlife that gives Alaska it's true character.

Sincerely,



Sam Rohrer

APHA President

CC:

House Resources Committee

Senate Resources Committee