



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Fish and Game

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
Headquarters Office

1255 West 8th Street
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
Main: 907.465.6136
Fax: 907.465.2332

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M. Sarah Creachbaum, Alaska Regional Director
National Park and Preserve
240 West 5th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

Via email: Sarah_Creachbaum@nps.gov

Director Creachbaum:

Thank you for your efforts to secure a meeting time to discuss the National Park Service (NPS) proposed rule, *Alaska; Hunting and Trapping in National Preserves*, with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). As you are aware, the meeting is scheduled for the morning of March 6, 2023, and the comment period for the rulemaking closes four days later (March 10, 2023). In my letter to NPS Director Sams, dated January 11, 2023, I requested the proposed rule be rescinded to allow adequate time for formal consultation and the development of a more informed rulemaking process. I want to note, even if the NPS is unwilling to rescind the rule, the State of Alaska (State) wants to actively consult with the NPS early and often in this rulemaking process. As reflected in our joint Master Memorandum of Understanding ("MMOU") between the NPS and ADF&G that has been in place for over forty years, signed in 1982 shortly after the passage of ANILCA, we agreed to "consult with each other when developing policy, legislation, and regulations which affect the attainment of wildlife resource management goals and objectives of the other agency." The agreement also provides that we will "coordinate planning for management of fish and wildlife resources on Service lands so that conflicts arising from differing legal mandates, objectives, and policies either do not arise or are minimized."

Considering the scheduled meeting is so close to the end of the comment period, we request an extension of 120 days for the comment period. This is the equivalent to the comment periods for the associated prior rulemakings. The additional time will allow our agencies to engage in meaningful consultation, including discussion of specific data underlying the proposed rule including State harvest data as well as possible revisions to the rulemaking moving forward, and then allow the State sufficient time to provide meaningful comments. Ultimately, it is the State's hope that we can creatively work together to avoid future conflict.

We must jointly recognize the intrinsic importance of, and Congress' intent for, meaningful dialogue and engagement between the NPS and the State as directed in ANILCA Section 1313, which states "...any regulations prescribing such restrictions relating to hunting, fishing, or trapping shall be put into effect only after consultation with the appropriate State agency having responsibility over hunting, fishing, and trapping activities." Although our agencies may have certain disagreements, one thing we cannot disagree on is the obligation to consult and cooperate and the value of dedicating adequate time, at the outset, to this effort. As we collectively seek to begin this process, the State looks forward to discussing how we can work synergistically to sustain the wildlife resources of Alaska within a complex environmental system with a vail of myriad policy directives, where wildlife does not adhere

to land status on the landscape, and we, as management agencies, have a responsibility to work collaboratively to achieve our mutually held interests for resource management.

I look forward to hearing from you soon on the status of the rulemaking process.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Lang", written in a cursive style.

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

cc: The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, United States Senate
 The Honorable Dan Sullivan, United States Senate
 The Honorable Mary Peltola, United States House of Representatives
 Tyson Gallagher, Chief of Staff, Governor's Office, State of Alaska
 Treg Taylor, Attorney General, Department of Law, State of Alaska