

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House District 6
Co-Chair House Resources Committee
Transportation Committee
Fisheries Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee



State Capitol Room 126
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4859
Fax (907) 465-3799
1-888-465-4859

REPRESENTATIVE ERIC A. FEIGE

HB 202 Sponsor Statement

"An Act raising the application fee for a drawing permit for the hunting of bison to \$20; requiring the game management plan for bison in the Delta Junction Bison Range Area to include mitigation of bison damage to farm crops and farm and personal property; and authorizing the commissioner of natural resources to make grants to mitigate or prevent damage caused by bison."

The plains bison is a magnificent animal brought to Alaska from North Dakota in 1928 by outdoorsmen in the Fairbanks area as a way to expand big game hunting opportunities in the Interior. As the herd has expanded and the Delta Junction area has developed, conflicts have arisen between the animals and the human population.

The introduction of grain crops in the area in the 1970s created a readily available source of feed for the bison and has resulted in a measureable growth of the herd, which is now over 500 animals.

Hunters have continued to enjoy hunting the animals, wildlife viewers have been able to occasionally see the bison when they emerge from the woody cover in the area, and farmers have experienced crop damage from the animals.

The Delta Bison Working Group was formed to discuss management practices for the herd and how to mitigate the damage caused by the bison. Following a series of meetings, the working group recommended fencing as an option for controlling the animals. The working group also recommended the permit hunting draw fee be increased to help fund herd management and damage mitigation.

House Bill 202 increases this popular draw permit application fee to \$20 and gives the commissioner of natural resources the authority to expend money for the purpose of addressing damage caused by the bison.