

From: leif wilson
Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 4:14 PM
To: Sen. Cathy Giessel
Subject: Guide concession program

40-Mile Air, Ltd.
PO Box 539
Tok, AK 99780

March 12, 2014

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am the Director of Operations for 40-Mile Air transporter, license #6, in Tok, Alaska. I also served 5 years on the Big Game Commercial Services Board dealing with guide and transporter issues.

I am writing this letter to offer my opinion on HB158 and SB160, specifically the amendment to HB158 to include transporters. I can see the benefits of a concession program for the guiding industry. I do not, however, believe that you should attempt to regulate transporters in the same manner, the transportation business is completely different than the guide business. If something needs to be done regarding transporters, I do not believe a concession program is the answer.

If there is a problem in an area it always comes down to either a social or a conservation issue. The root cause of the problem is usually too many hunters in the field in a specific area. Why not deal with that directly with registration or draw permits. These can be separated and allocated however you like, to residents and non-residents. The fact is that a lot of residents use transporters. Around 80% of our clients every year are residents. I believe that a lot of the pressure from the guide industry to include transporters in this program is simply to reduce access to the areas they are hunting in. In our case and all over the state you would be reducing access to a lot of resident hunters.

Another big problem with adding transporters to this bill is found in Alaska Statue 08.54.790. If you read this carefully, you will realize that an air taxi can haul hunters without a transporter license. As a matter of fact, one of the larger air taxis in Fairbanks that transports lots of hunters to the field every year, does not have a transporter license and legally is not required to. The transporter license allows you to "advertise", meaning to solicit big game hunters to be customers and to charge a different tariff or charter rate for the carriage of big game hunters. Those are the only two things that a transporter license allows a air taxi to do that he could not do without one.

Why create another bureaucracy in Juneau that is determining who the chosen ones are, let the free enterprise system work. If the need to restrict numbers of people in the field arises, whoever is lucky enough to get or draw a tag can chose whomever they desire to transport them into the field. It is simple, addresses the root cause of the problem and makes use of a system that we already have in place.

Sincerely,

Leif Wilson
Director of Operations