

From: Wayne

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To: <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>

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Subject: SB 160 - DNR Guide Concession Bill

Senator Giessel and Senate Resource Committee Members,

I was unable to testify yesterday, but listened to it last night. I did send testimony in yesterday, in addition to my testimony now. I heard a lot of Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) bashing and a lot of conflicting testimony from the two opposing sides. From where you sit, you guys need the wisdom of Solomon to figure this out. I know the young guy who has supposedly invested “millions”, and who now considers himself “one of the best guides in the state”, tell you to look hard for the facts and truths. I found that to be pretty humorous. Furthermore, he has set up shop in one of the more crowded river corridors and uses airboats in his operation, and he says there is no problem where he operates? I suspect the residents will tell you something different. I’ve heard from some of them myself.

APHA did work hard to get something like this, but I don’t see anything in the prospectus that says APHA members are going to fair any better in the prospectus process than any of the other guides. Most of us realize the real risk of being down sized or put out of business by not getting an area, but feel it is worth the risk if it improves the longevity and stability of the industry and wildlife resource, and even the public perception of registered guides, who are 85% Alaska residents. Whoever the ones are who get a concession, we feel their chance of being able to stay in business will be better than it is now. To me, the opposition sounds like the woman who would rather cut the child in half than see the real mother get it (1 Kings 3:16-28). Often, many of the resident Alaskans who are so opposed to non resident participation in Alaska, are relative newcomers themselves, hunt as non residents in other states, or have no qualms about bringing non resident friends and family hunting. Also most of them are unaware that roughly 15% non resident participation pays for about 80% of Alaska’s game management.

I also heard someone say that APHA represents less than 10% of the guides”. The average number of registered and master guides that actually sign contracts each year is about 300. You have to be a registered or master guide to be a professional member of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), but we also have assistant guide and sustaining members too. APHA’s professional membership averages about 125 per year or about 40% of the guides who sign contracts each year. Further research in the past has shown that APHA professional members conduct 50 – 70% of the total number of guided hunts per year. The argument by the opposition that APHA doesn’t represent the industry or that they represent less than 10% of the industry is entirely false. **APHA represents a majority of the guides that conduct the majority of the guided hunts in Alaska.** In early February 2013, APHA’S Board of Directors invited the entire professional membership to participate in a teleconference on the DNR GCP. It went on for several hours and 45 professional members were in attendance. Support for the latest version of the DNR GCP wasn’t unanimous but was a very significant majority. As a result, the BOD voted unanimously to support the latest version of the DNR GCP, and subsequently supports SB 160. ***And again, what about the multiple thousands of residents – do they really want to see unregulated commercial harvest continue on state land?***

Concerning transporters – certainly that is a big problem that needs to be dealt with soon. I think the time to start on that, is immediately after we get a guide concession plan worked out. Trying to do it now, to me would be like trying to stick 2 big passengers in a Super cub, instead of taking one at a time. I think many of those that fault the concession plan because it doesn’t include transporters, do so just to make it harder to pass. Even if you include transporters now, I doubt that any of those in opposition are going to change their mind.

I know money is tight, but it seems like a 50 – 70 million dollar per year industry – with half of it going to rural Alaska, is worth a few bucks worth of start up money to preserve.

Sincerely,

Wayne Kubat - Master Guide # 47

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