

From: Melvin Grove [<mailto:mbgrove@mtaonline.net>]

Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2015 11:42 AM

Subject: Re: HB137-E

Representative Talerico, I believe the non resident tags are fine and doubling the fee would greatly discourage non-residents from coming to Alaska. Thanks for keeping the cost reasonable. As for resident fees I and many of the folks I see on a daily basis coming into my marine shop believe we should see some sort of benefit from increasing our fishing license. I.E. more fishing opportunity with more fish in our streams. Over the last decade we've seen less not more and I suggest we attach the Personal Use Fisheries bill to this one. At least then we might see some benefit from our hard earned money. My charter clients have seen less opportunity for fishing in Valdez not more. I see no reason why resident AND non residents should pay more for fishing less with decreased opportunity to harvest fish. As for hunting license fee I support the current increases. The state has been moving forward on our hunting opportunity over the last decade and hopefully we will continue to progress in that direction.

Best regards and thank you for your service.

Mel Grove
Halibut Grove Valdez Charters
907-440-9148/907-200-2202
2281 East Sun Mountain Ave. Ste B.
Wasilla, Alaska 99654

From: Gary Stevens [<mailto:garyatsls@cs.com>]

Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2015 10:59 AM

Subject: HB137-E

Representative Talerico,

Thank you for sponsoring HB137. It is time that we all pay a little more for the opportunity to hunt, fish, & trap in Alaska.

I do have a few issues with the bill as it currently stands:

- 1) All proposed price increases on Nonresident Big Game Tags are approximately 50%. I believe that should be the minimum increase, however, they could be increased by as much as 100%. The exception would be Wolf, which I believe should remain at \$30.
- 2) The proposed price increases on Nonresident Alien Big Game Tags vary from 18% (Sheep) to 50% (Wolf). I strongly believe that they should all be at least 50%, and again, I wouldn't be opposed to the increase being as much as 100%. The exception would be Wolf, which I believe should remain at \$50.
- 3) Increasing the qualifying age for the free "senior" license from 60 years to 62 years is relatively meaningless. Instead, I would suggest replacing this option by adding "is 60 years of age or older" to page four under "(6) (A) however, the fee is \$5 for an applicant who"
- 4) All the licenses could be increased a little more as well

Also, thank you for removing the proposed Resident Big Game Tags that were included in the initial bill. Please contact me if any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Gary

garyatsls@cs.com

Gary Stevens
PO Box 672145
Chugiak, AK 99567
907-229-4710

From: Dick/Mary Bishop [<mailto:dmbishop@ptialaska.net>]

Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2015 3:56 PM

Subject: HB 137

Dear Rep. Talerico:

Thank you for addressing the need for increased funding for Alaska fish and game management by introducing HB 137. I support that concept.

Increased fees, or taxes, are seldom popular but sometimes are necessary and important. I always like to note that hunters and fishers have been among the first to support increased fees when it was important to care for fish and wildlife, going back decades to the federal duck stamp, the Pittman-Robertson (P-R) Act, and the Dingell-Johnson (D-J) Act all of which increased costs for themselves. Their support of such measures led to hugely successful conservation programs that have benefitted everyone.

Alaska's hunters, fishers and trappers are lucky to have so much opportunity for such modest fees, which haven't been raised for almost 2 decades, even though the costs of fish and game management have increased like everything else. It's time for us to "step up to the plate" and pay a bit more for our good fortune. And it's appropriate that non-residents also share the increased costs, because they, too, have been getting bargains.

It's a good time to increase hunting and trapping license fees because of the current great increase in P-R funds allocated to states, to be matched 3 P-R or D-J dollars to one state dollar raised from license and tag fees. Alaska should be prepared to take advantage of the increase in P-R and D-J funds by raising license and tag fees.

To take full advantage of the available matching funds I recommend that resident license and non-resident license and tag fees be raised a bit more than proposed in HB 137, but I would also recommend eliminating the resident tag fees except sheep in specific trophy management areas, and for brown bear in certain coastal areas. I think that most of the resident tag fees go too far for most Alaskans.

I would welcome other innovations to support continued enhancement of big game populations of high importance for wild foods for Alaskans.

Thank you again for introducing HB 137. I look forward to its being "fine-tuned" and passed.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Bishop
1555 Gus's Grind
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907-455-6151

From: Brandon Wall [<mailto:brandonw.wall@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2015 2:37 AM

Subject: HB 137 Support with suggestion

House Resources Co-Chairs Rep. Talerico and Rep. Nageak,

I support HB-137 but I have a suggestion relating to resident big game tags.

As the State faces some serious deficits, not many departments can shift the cost of doing business onto those that directly benefit from the services that those departments provide. The Department of Fish and Game is one exception. If I understand their budget correctly, only about 10% of their revenue consists of license fees, which seems lower than it should be. As a hunter and fisherman and father of three kids that are hunters, fishermen and now trappers, I believe that the job that ADFG does to manage our state's resources is a very important one. Because I feel like our family benefits from that service, it is only fair that we carry a larger burden to support it if we don't want to see it drastically cut over the next few years.

In reading HB-137 and the accompanying sponsor statement, I agree that it is about time that license fees are increased. Alaska sportsmen get a lot more bang for their buck buying a license than every other state.

I am, however, very concerned about the substantial increase in fees for resident big game tags. On the face of it, I don't think that the dollar amount is unreasonable. However, it doesn't take into account that many people in Alaska hunt as a team or a group, they do it for food (often shared among extended family), and most are conservationists by nature.

As an example:

My father, my two oldest boys and I will get black bear tags at the beginning of the season. Currently, that is (4) hunters picking up like (3) tags each because that is the way the come. At the most, we will only fill (2) of those tags because that is all the black bear meat that our extended family will need. Sometimes, it might be my dad and I trying to fill the tags, it might be my dad heading out alone, it might be all four of us together or it might be the boys out with one of their hunting buddy's family. The point is, if we wanted (2) bear, we would need to buy (8) tags based on who is hunting with who, when and where - that's pretty expensive at 8 x \$50 especially if we are really only planning to harvest two black bears.

I know there are a number of people that split a moose between two hunters. That's the plan going in, knowing their families really only can use 1/2 of a moose each. But to be legal, each hunter would need to get a tag, where they really only need one.

It would sure be nice if either (a) those tag fees were substantially lower or (b) there was some way for tags to be purchased as a "party tag" or "community tag" wherein some number of different hunters could fill that single tag.

Thanks for your work and for your consideration,

Brandon Wall
Wasilla, Alaska

From: Robert Mathews Jr [<mailto:rmathewsjr3@gmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2015 4:39 PM

Subject: Re: HB137-E

Representative Talerico,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for sponsoring HB137, but would also like to point out a few issues I have with the bill in its entirety.

1) I would recommend the proposed increase to be a minimum of 50% and as much as 80% for resident fee and as much as 100% for Nonresident fee across the board. I would also ask for an exception to Wolves, which should remain at the proposed fee for both resident and Nonresident.

2) Sec. 7 I agree with raising the annual family gross income to \$29,820.00 as long as the welfare clause is removed from the bill. I have talked to people in Delta Junction and many agree that all of Sec. 7 should be removed and placed in the hands of the departments within the State that handle welfare.

3) I also agree with increasing the qualifying age for the free senior license from 60 but disagree with the proposed age of 62. That is an insignificant change and I believe the change to be no less than age 65 with 70 being the nominal age.

I do commend you on removing the proposed Big Game Tag fees that were in the initial bill and would ask for your consideration in the upcoming modifications that might happen to stand firm on keeping them out of the bill.

Sincerely,

Rob Mathews

[Rmathewsjr3@gmail.com](mailto:rmathewsjr3@gmail.com)

Rob Mathews

Board of Directors Delta Sportsman's Association

From: Brian Mason [<mailto:brimason@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, March 20, 2015 10:40 AM

Subject: HB 137

Members of the House Resources Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support HB 137 and whatever iteration this may take if a similar bill comes before the Senate. While I am generally in favor of low taxes and limited government, it is far past time for an increase of revenue to our Department of Fish and Game as it seeks to carry out its mandate of science-based management of our fish and wildlife resources.

As you likely know, the last increase to license and tag fees was in 1993. In the intervening 22 years inflation has eroded the ability of ADF&G to adequately fund research, fly population surveys, attract qualified personnel, and simply keep up with the details of wildlife management. In the meantime, the Board of Fish and the Board of Game have asked more of our Department through various initiatives such as Intensive Management laws and the like. The idea of doing more with less has merit as it comes to government spending, but at a certain point the realities of budgetary constraints runs up against the need to carry out the job we have asked our Department to do.

In this time of falling oil revenues, it should be added that any increase in license fees would be matched 3:1 by Federal Pittman-Robertson funds. Sportsmen and women across Alaska pay into this fund every time we buy ammunition, firearms, and tackle, yet we do not receive back the amount that we pay in due to our limited contributions. As we increase our own fees, each dollar will bring in three additional dollars from the taxes we have already paid. To leave this money in the hands of the Federal Government is short-sighted at best, and harmful to the mission of ADF&G at worst.

If possible, I would also encourage you to amend the bill to reinstitute resident tag fees for big game. I understand why HB 137 was changed, as I think it started far too high with some of the proposed tag fees. \$50 for a black bear tag is obviously a non-starter, as are tag fees for species like wolves that are generally taken as a target of opportunity. That said, even a nominal fee such as \$10 for a general big game tag or a similar fee focused on species such as Dall Sheep, Mountain Goat, or Brown Bear would go a long way towards bringing in needed revenue to a Department and State that is in a tight budgetary place at the moment.

As a resident hunter who highly values the opportunities provided by this wonderful state, I recognize that I need to contribute to professional wildlife management. Even printing out regulations and harvest ticket costs money, not to mention more significant expenses involved with population surveys, data analysis, and the like. The time has come for us, the residents of the State of Alaska, to step up and contribute a small amount to the management that we all benefit from. That our contributions will be increased 300% by matching P-R funds makes this an obvious choice in my view. I appreciate the efforts of the current Legislature to rein in government spending and to find efficiencies in State departments, but in this case I would encourage you to support increased revenues for all of the reasons mentioned above.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brian Mason (R)

Eagle River, AK

From: Thomas Lamal [<mailto:tomlamal@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Sunday, March 22, 2015 7:59 AM

Subject: HB 137

My name is Tom Lamal and I live in Fairbanks.

I have been a resident of Alaska for nearly 45 years.

I support HB 137.

I have researched how other states fund their departments and it appears we could generate a lot more money by adopting some of their policies.

Example:

Montana described their policies as "a simple process." 70% of their Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks come's from Nonresident tag fees and 30% comes from resident tag fees. It is a self-funded department. Not very complicated. This self-funding concept will require the Department to manage for abundance so both residents and nonresidents will want to purchase tags.

The western states also maintain a high allocation of their game resources for their residents and still fund their departments through tag fees. The nonresident can obtain up to 10% of their tags but 10% is not guaranteed and at least 90% of their game is reserved for their residents.

In order for the Department of Fish and Game to support itself the residents are going to have to pitch in with tag fees and you are going to have to eliminate the guide requirement so more nonresidents will apply for sheep, goat, and bear tags.

This will require putting nonresidents on permits because the number of applicants will be high. Please look at how other states address these issues.

I am aware that you have a lot of different agendas being presented from all sides. I am asking that before any decisions are made that all Alaskans are considered and not special interests. The residents don't have a lobbyist, so we have to depend on you – the representatives we voted into office.

This is not a budget cut. It is a way to create revenue for the State of Alaska. If we can bring in money, we can ease cuts on schools, etc. I'm sure most parents would support this concept.

Alaskans First!

Thank You

From: Michael Tinker [<mailto:miketinkerak@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, March 20, 2015 5:04 PM

Subject: Re: Testimony for CSHB137

My name is Mike Tinker and I live at 478 Alpha Way in Ester. (Phone 322-2158) I thank Rep. Talerico for sharing information during the development of CSHB137 and offering an opportunity to comment. As a out front sensitive issue, I appreciate getting the discussion of ideas for revisions to AS 16.05.251, AS 16.05.340, and. AS 16.05.400 The discussion is overdue.

The purpose of the legislation, as I understand it, is to provide stable funding for the Divisions of Sport Fish and Wildlife Conservation without increasing the use of general funds in the near future. Further, the concept of reducing general funds to these two divisions is a tall order given that they have less than %15 of the department's total GF. As background, you should be aware that using a rounded population of 750,000 for the state, each Alaskan now "spends" \$1.67 for the combination of SF and WC. For comparison, that allocation for the just Commercial Fishing is \$7.12. My point is that these two divisions are not much burden when compared to the total GF in next year's budget.

My calculations, again rounded somewhat, reveal that approximately 27% of the Alaska resident population buys a hunting and/or fishing license.

The presentation from the NGOs that began the testimony to the House Resource Committee was a bit self serving. Less than 15% of all license holders are in any way connected to the SCI, TSI, APHA or AOC. That leaves 85% of us who must be the "followers" if those four are the self proclaimed "leaders". Don't for a minute assume that those four who testified represent your constituents.

The legislation's license and tag increases by "type" need to be considered with respect to the number of licenses sold. Comparing different opinions on how much to increase is not responsive to the market just as a percentage increase across the board is not responsive to either the ability to market or to emphasize management concerns. Even those guides who testified today commonly encourage clients to buy lower cost black bear and wolf tags with the purpose of helping with predator control. Raising those tag fees, as an example, goes against the management strategy to reduce in areas with low density ungulate populations.

On license increase, care should be given to raise trapping licenses at all. Even a \$5 increase is liable to reduce the funding available for fur bearer management. With less that 2,000 Trapping Licenses sold and another 9,000+ sold as part of combinations, many of those combinations are not active trappers, rather they are sympathetic with trapping and "donating" to the fur bearer management. Raising the trapping portion may cause those combination buyers to spend their money on the combinations without trapping. 19,255 of the low income licenses include trapping but contribute very little.

The low income license proposal to remove the "assistance" part of AS 16.05.340(a)(6) is really necessary. Moving the family income threshold to the \$29,820 threshold is also an excellent action to modernize this portion of the statutes. I would recommend you consider raising the low income license fee as well. If we assume there are three license aged family members, they would be getting \$180

value in licenses for \$15. The problem is that it cost just as much to manage wildlife and record harvest for low income hunters and fishers as it does those who pay the full resident rate.

This section of the statutes contains language from pre-McDowell (no discrimination between Alaskans based on zip code). The legislation should remove or change any reference. A project to change the entire statute to post McDowell language should have been undertaken right after the Supreme Court decision but unfortunately has not been accomplished.

There is an opportunity to realign the terminology in hunting and fishing licenses with their use or uses. An example is the concept from the Kenai that we begin a sockeye salmon stamp and include the Personal Use dipnet fisheries. There is no record or language in AS 16 of the legislature passing a license requirement (fee) for PU fisheries. The Board of Fisheries exceeded their "funding" authority by passing a regulation requiring a Sport Fishing License for dipnetting. Although the harvest permit is issued to a family (defined in regulation) each participant over 16 is now required to have a sport fishing license in possession.

I recommend the committee look at removing the term "sport" from resident fishing licenses. At the present time, unlike hunting where license and reporting are required, subsistence fishers harvest without license. They do have reporting requirements but compliance has always been a problem. The department spends considerable effort and staff time permitting and managing subsistence fisheries with no income from the participants at all. A classic example is the fishwheel fishery in the Glennallen subdistrict for the Copper River.

These loopholes could be fixed with a bit of language in CSHB137 without any number changes at all. The conservation decal or even conservation license or both is a terrific idea. Even tour boat visitors would want to "manage so they can see the whales, bears and birds". \$20 may be a bit steep but some research on other states as suggested by Rep. Tarr should give us a starting point.

One last comment. The number of non-resident hunters given by the NGOs includes a high percentage of those who hunt with next of kin rather than guides. Estimate for moose tags, for example, is maybe 35% are guided non-residents the rest are hunting with family. Moose tags are the second highest number sold next to brown/grizzly bears. There are unintended consequences for Alaskan families from just raising the tag fees across the board.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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> Mike Tinker

From: White, John D (RCA) [<mailto:john.white1@alaska.gov>]

Sent: Monday, March 09, 2015 11:38 AM

Subject: house bill 137

Representative Seaton,

I am writing today to express my disapproval of recently introduced House Bill 137 as written. As a resident of Alaska I hunt, fish, trap and enjoy all that Alaska has to offer. I have read the text of HB 137 and do not believe the bill, as written, is in the best interest of Alaska residents or the Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). I am opposed to the new tag fee costs the bill creates for all big game species available to hunters. The fees for brown bear, black bear and wolf are counter-productive to both the Board of Game (BOG) and ADFG's work to reduce the predator population in the state. By creating a new fee of \$50 per each black bear tag, this bill effectively places a barrier between residents who do their part in harvesting black bears to reduce the overall population. I for one will not purchase a black bear tag at \$50, and therefore will no longer harvest them, which is the opposite of what the BOG and ADFG are trying to do. Other areas of the state with increased brown / grizzly bear numbers, for which ADFG has removed the tag fee, increased the limit to 2 and allowed baiting will also suffer.

I believe the best policy for management is allowing the biologists at ADFG, the BOG and the residents work together to reach goals. Management through legislation has never worked and is a proven failed policy many states have succumbed to. This bill as written, with its new and otherwise increased costs effectively "hamstrings" the BOG and ADFG.

I am also opposed to increasing the low income qualifications from \$8,200 to \$29,820 as proposed in the bill. If tag fees are not created / increased, the increase to low-income would be unnecessary. Increasing the low income qualifications by \$21,000 effectively places increased burden on everyone else purchasing licenses and tags. The burden being placed on middle class families like mine is becoming overwhelming. We are continually forced to pay more for nearly everything, while those who qualify for "low income" continually are relieved of any cost burden.

Having voiced some opposition, I will now offer some support. I am not opposed to a license fee increase as proposed by the bill. I believe that a modest license fee increase is warranted and justifiable and will gladly pay more to support hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife viewing in Alaska. I am strictly opposed to the fees as proposed. (I would also remain opposed to even a small tag fee, as implementing new costs is a slippery slope. The cost would be small and a modest \$5 to start, which would eventually creep upwards each year with no limit, effectively pricing residents out of hunting and fishing opportunities.) I also support the increase to non-resident tag fees as proposed by the bill.

I would like to also propose an idea to increase funding via sales as well as appease those, like myself opposed to the tag fee. My idea would be to create a new "stamp" people could purchase voluntarily. The proceeds of which would go directly and solely to fund ADFG for management purposes only, not towards administrative costs. A voluntary "habitat" stamp of \$10 with strict limitations as to its use would be one I would gladly pay for. I would also suggest the "fund" into which the monies are allocated, be open to accepting corporate donations as well. This way Safari Club International, the Alaska Professional Hunters Association, Cabelas, Bass Pro shops, et al. could contribute.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your time and attention to my comments, and urge you to not support the bill as written.

Sincerely,

John White

Thank you for introducing this bill. I served on Governor Walkers wildlife transition team. The team came up with the recommendation to increase fees recognizing the PR funds not untiltized by the state. I am a past BOG member, BGCS member, current Federal Regional Advisory Council & Subsistence Resource Commission member. Alaska definitely need an increase but some of the fees are much too high in some areas & need to be higher in other areas. Any animals in IM should be exempt of tag fees, hunting license should be \$50, senior free license should cost the same for the initiation of it. Yes, it could go to 62, but there should be some as to take it away when people leave the state. This is abused once people leave Alaska permanently.

The biggest issue is the drawing. The fees for a tag a hunter draws need to be high. Things like the sheep for residents for instance should be \$150, brown bear on kodiak \$200 & so on. Resident tag fees for moose, caribou, deer, elk, black bear could be \$10. Sheep & grizzly/brown bear could be \$25, but bison should be \$350 for a cow & \$500 for a bull.

I think some of the NR alien fees are too high especially for black bear. Make these charges similar to Canada.

Sue Entsminger

883-2833

Tok