

From: White, John D (RCA) [<mailto:john.white1@alaska.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 3:12 PM
To: Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Maridon Boario
Subject: House Bill 137

House Resource Committee Co-chair

Representative Nageak,

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 in favor of 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