



March 22, 2016

Comments on HB 317 Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform

To: Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux
Cc: Rep. Tammie Wilson
Re: HB 317

Dear Representative LeDoux and members of House Judiciary Committee,

Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) **supports** HB 317 to reform our civil asset forfeiture laws.

We are aware of many cases in the hunting realm where hunters have been accused of hunting violations and had assets such as aircraft, weapons, atvs etc. seized by Troopers prior to the case making its way through the court system. In cases where the individual was found innocent, but had assets seized, it often costs thousands of dollars to recover those seized assets. Not to mention the loss of use of those assets while the case goes through the court system.

We understand and respect the need of our law enforcement agencies, in particular Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT), to receive adequate funding in order to enforce our laws. However, there has always been a conflict in using seized assets to fund law enforcement agencies in that such a system can clearly be abused and harm innocent individuals. There also needs to be a better process in place so that "probable cause" alone does not result in the seizure of assets, and a process whereby individuals not convicted of a crime, who have had assets seized, can reclaim their property without undue expense and time.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,
Mark Richards
Executive Director - Resident Hunters of Alaska
info@residenthuntersofalaska.org