

ALASKA STATE HOUSE

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REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Sponsor Statement for CS House Bill 137(RES)

“An Act raising certain fees related to sport fishing, hunting, and trapping; relating to fish and game conservation decals; raising the age of eligibility for a sport fishing, hunting, or trapping license exemption for state residents; raising the age at which a state resident is required to obtain a license for sport fishing, hunting, or trapping; and providing for an effective date.”

House Bill 137 is a response to calls from individual hunters, fishers, outdoorsman groups, and the Department of Fish & Game (DF&G) to raise license and tag fees for DF&G. There is currently a deficiency between the costs associated with management and research needs and the revenue brought in by license and tag fees. The primary change that HB 137 makes is raising resident, nonresident, and military hunting, fishing, trapping, and combination licenses to help deal with this deficiency. However, the most significant change in fees occurs to *nonresident* big game tag fees.

HB 137 also limits eligibility for a low-income license only to *Alaskans* that have an annual income less than the limit in statute. The annual family gross income limit to be eligible for this license is being raised from \$8,200 to \$29,820 to match the current poverty level for a family of four in Alaska.

The bill also creates a voluntary fish and game conservation decal that a person who does not hunt or fish can purchase in order to contribute to the conservation efforts in Alaska.

The final change to this bill is to raise the age of eligibility for the hunting, fishing, and trapping license exemption from 60 years to 62 years. Also, residents under the age of 18 are exempt from having sport fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses, and nonresidents under the age of 16 are exempt from having a sport fishing license.

It has been over 17 years since many nonresident fees have been raised and over 24 years since most resident fish and game fees have been raised. Though the fee increases in HB 137 will not match the increase in costs associated with fish and game management, this bill helps ensure that Alaskans can continue to enjoy use of Alaska’s abundant fish and game resources.