

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 105 – Gordon Haber Denali Wolf Special Management Area

House Bill 105 aims to create the Gordon Haber Denali Wolf Special Management Area which would be a buffer zone near the border of Denali National Park where wolves may not be hunted.

The area would be named for Gordon Haber, who was a biologist that had done wolf-prey research in Denali National Park and other areas of Alaska from 1966 to 2009. While doing the work that he loved, Gordon tragically died in a plane crash in Denali National Park on October 14, 2009.

For many years Denali National Park had been known as one of the best places in the world to view wild wolves. In 2013, Denali had 530,921 visitors, who contributed \$513,355,000 to Alaska's economy. The opportunity to view wolves is a big incentive to visit the park. Unfortunately wolf viewing success has declined dramatically. A buffer zone previously established in 2000 on the park's eastern boundary to protect the wolves was removed by the Board of Game in 2010. In 2014, less than 6% of park visitors were able to see wolves, down from 45 percent back in 2010. Wolf population has declined from 116 in spring 2006 to 50 in spring 2014. House Bill 105 helps to correct these trends.

I invite you to discuss this issue with me further and urge you to support this legislation