

*[HB 105 - Testimony on behalf of AWA]*

Thank you to co-chairs Representative Josephson and Representative Tarr, and members of the Resources Committee for this opportunity to testify.

My name is Connie Brandel. I am a staff member and the secretary/treasurer of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, and I am speaking on behalf of the organization. Briefly, the Alaska Wildlife Alliance is a non-profit organization based in Anchorage and founded more than 35 years ago. We advocate for healthy ecosystems, scientifically managed to protect our wildlife for present and future generations.

The Alaska Wildlife Alliance asks you to support HB 105.

For years AWA and other groups have tried asking, pleading, demanding, all but begging the Alaska Board of Game to re-establish a no hunting/trapping buffer for the Wolf Townships, the area addressed in this bill. To date the Board of Game has steadfastly and single-mindedly maintained its priority of representing only the interests of consumptive users of wildlife.

To briefly summarize the situation: hunters/trappers use the Wolf Townships area to target wolves as they cross the park boundary; radio-collar telemetry shows wolves frequent this area in winter and spring in search of prey. As Dr. Steiner noted in his testimony during the Feb. 10 public hearing, research confirms the loss of a single breeder wolf can - and has - caused the entire pack to disburse. This compounds the effects of hunting and trapping far beyond the killing of individual wolves. The Denali wolf population, according to the park's own count, remains low.

The Wolf Townships area is situated just north of the park road, meaning the wolves targeted for killing are the same animals that are – or would be – the most easily viewed by the more than half a million people who visit Denali annually. Let me emphasize: when these wolves were protected by a buffer, 45 percent of visitors were lucky enough to spot a wolf along the park road. Since the last buffer was removed in 2010, only about 5 percent of visitors have been able to spot a wolf.

Let me compare another set of numbers:

Only 2 or 3 individuals trap within the Wolf Townships. That's all. If this area is closed, they are of course free to utilize the next-closest lands, the hundreds of thousands of acres to the north, east and south of the park boundaries. Let's compare 2 or 3 to, conservatively, 500,000 visitors per year who come to Denali, virtually every one of whom hopes to see the park's iconic grizzly bears and wolves. Why does this handful of trappers have more of a "right" to these wolves than others?

Dr. Steiner has offered a very detailed and compelling presentation of the link between Denali wildlife, tourism, and revenue to the state. I won't attempt to repeat or re-analyze the data. AWA wholeheartedly concurs with the conclusions he presented.

I would like to thank Representative Josephson for offering a simple, logical, and easily workable solution to this situation. I hope that this committee, and the House and Senate will listen to the majority of residents who for years have wanted this area set aside to protect these wolves protected. I hope you will agree with us that this management area will create many, many important benefits for the state for years to come.

I will conclude on the topic of money, which we seem to be talking about a lot in Alaska these days. Variations of this have been said many, many times, but I believe it goes to the heart of the Denali wolf issue:

A wolf can be killed and cash – at most a few hundred dollars - collected for its pelt only once. That same wolf alive can be photographed, recorded, sketched, tracked and just simply watched and enjoyed perhaps thousands of times during its lifetime. I wouldn't attempt to calculate how much one live wolf might "earn" for the state in visitor dollars per year – that's too hypothetical for me. But I sincerely believe that a living, wild wolf able to be seen by hundreds of thousands of people has to be worth its weight in gold for Alaska.

I ask that you please vote in favor of HB 105, the Gordon Haber Denali Wolf Special Management Area. Thank you very much.

To the House Resources Committee

:

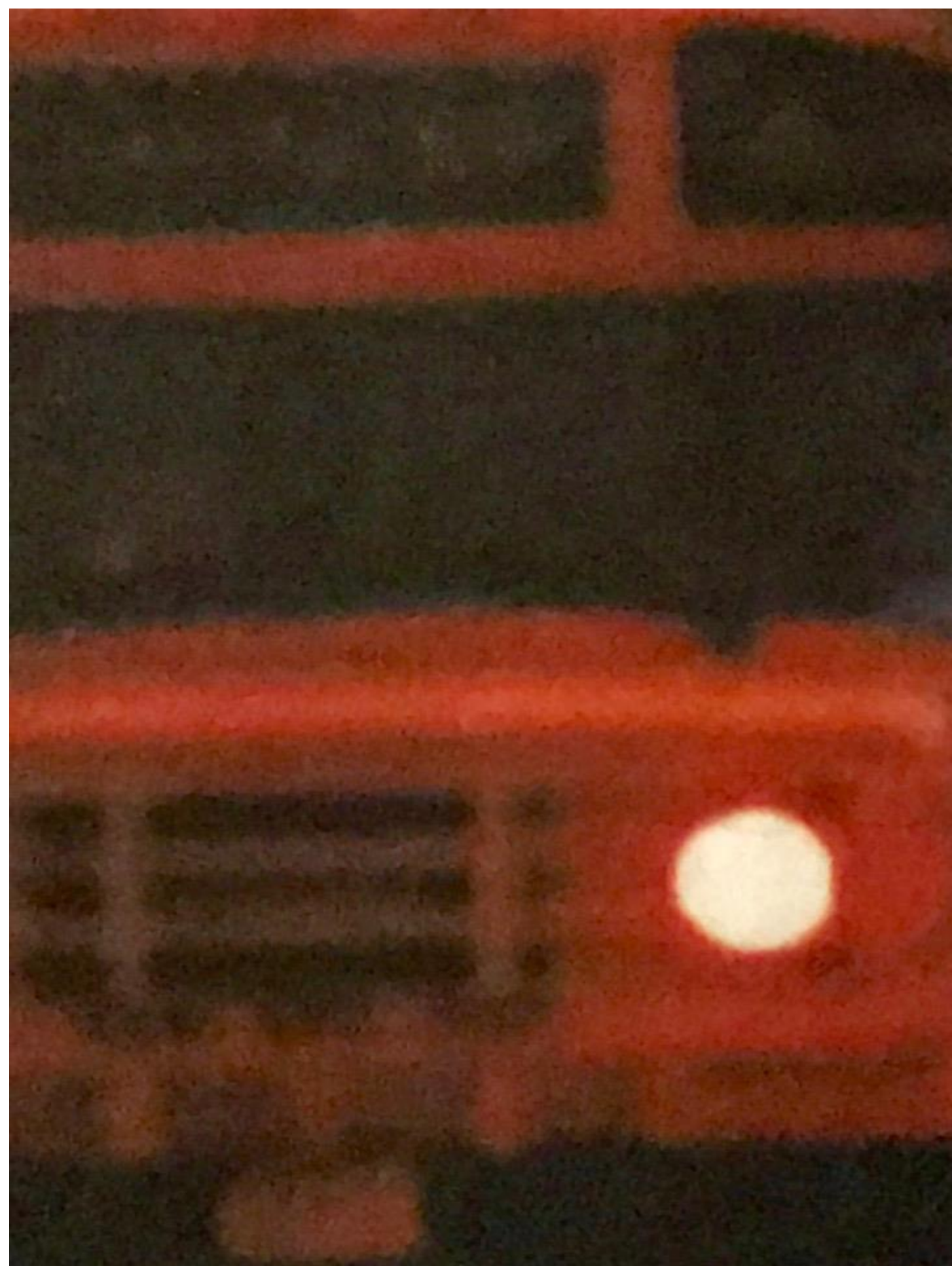
HB 105 will help Alaska's economy and one of the best ways we can go about that is enhancing the wildlife tourism industry. We should be doing everything we can to support the Alaska economy.

which is

a \$2.7 billion/year industry, and visitor spending at Denali over \$567 million/year, much driven by wildlife viewing in the park.

HB 105 also supports the State Constitution. The principle of equity, fairness and common ownership of all resources (including wildlife) by all Alaskans, is embodied in: Article 8, Sections 2 and 3 All of us guaranteed equal access to, and use of, the wildlife of Denali, including all 70,000 Alaskans who visit the park each year wanting to see them alive -- not just the 2 or 3 individuals who hunt and trap them along the NE boundary. HB 105 is the fix.

I have attached a photo that illustrates the immeasurable value of live wolves in Denali National Park.





And one trapper/shooter on the park boundary can ruin that experience for so many:



Please support HB 105

. Thank you..

Barbara Brease

PO Box 549

Healy AK 99743

Written testimony in support of HB105

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of HB105. My name is Yasuhiro Ozuru, an Anchorage resident. I am in strong support of this Bill that provide protection to wolves in Denali national park, whose population has been declining rapidly. I am in support of this bill for two reasons: one moral and the other economic. First, providing a necessary protection to wolves in Denali national park is our moral responsibility to both citizen of Alaska and the world beyond. Denali is one of the very few places in the world where visitor has some chance of observing wild wolves. But, recently the chance has declined significantly. We, Alaskan, are proud of having such a beautiful national park that embraces true wilderness in our own backyard, and we publicly express such a pride. Then, we should act responsibly to protect the intrinsic value (not just economic value) of such a wonderful place. Providing necessary protection to maintain the quality of Denali national park is also consistent with us Alaskan's special regards of the Denali, which is often considered to be scared mountain and space among Native Alaskan. Protection is also important for economic reason, I have heard that the chance of seeing wolves is larger in Yellowstone National park in Wyoming these days than in Denali. The spread of such information may change potential tourists mind such that they would rather go to Yellowstone than Denali. This would mean that we lose some significant revenue to the state economy, which is already suffering from low oil price. In this sense, it is extremely important to maintain the attractiveness of Denali National Park to potential tourists who contribute to Alaskan economy in very significant ways. This bill is a significant step to provide necessary protection to Denali wolves that are important for both moral and economic reasons for our beautiful state.

**From:** Philip Marshall [<mailto:pmarshall@acetekk.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 10, 2017 9:43 AM  
**To:** LIO Fairbanks <[Lio.Fairbanks@akleg.gov](mailto:Lio.Fairbanks@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Support HB 105

Dear Staff,

Please forward to Rep. Josephson:

We support HB 105 to recreate a Denali wild animal, and especially wolf, buffer zone on the northeast side of Denali National Park. It would reestablish a more effective balance of the ecosystem and address the public clamor for more wildlife in this critical area. Thank you for attempting this alternative route to policy change since we are stymied by the Alaska Board of Game and the Governor. Having written letters, petitioned and testified, we know.

All the best,

Sincerely,

Philip Marshall and Janet Lokken Marshall

1300 Skyline Drive

Fairbanks, Alaska 99712

Tel: (907) 457-3895

E-mail: [pmarshall@acetekk.com](mailto:pmarshall@acetekk.com)

Web: [www.polhavnwoodfabrik.com](http://www.polhavnwoodfabrik.com)



Dear Mr. Josephson,

Thanks so much for your common-sense-based promotion and support of these issues, which benefit all Alaskans--even those who don't know it. I am out of state currently but will try to call in to testify. Meanwhile, just in case I don't make it, here is a written statement in support of HB 105 specifically. As a longtime subsistence user (I lived in Inupiaq villages in the upper Kobuk 20 years and was an active hunter) and wolf advocate (I was co-sponsor of Ballot Measure 2 in 2008 on predator control) and a full-time professional wildlife photographer and writer who has photographed and written about wolves in Denali NP) and a regular presenter on Princess Cruises who encounters Alaska visitors constantly who hope to see wolves in Denali, or are deeply disappointed because they tried and did not) I do have strong feelings on this matter.

Nick Jans  
Alaska writer-photographer  
HC 60 Box 2628  
Haines AK 99827

-----Original Message-----

From: Mei Mei Evans [<mailto:m2evans@alaskapacific.edu>]

Sent: Friday, February 10, 2017 8:33 AM

To: Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Geran Tarr  
<[Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)>

Subject: save Denali's wolves

Dear Andy Josephson and Geran Tarr:

I write in support of Denali's wolves. We now have an opportunity with HB 105 to protect them from the hunting and trapping that has so endangered their numbers. I hope you will both champion its cause among your legislative colleagues.

Thank you.

Mei Mei Evans, Ph.D.

**From:** Nina Faust [<mailto:aknina51@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2017 6:53 AM

**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Geran Tarr  
<[Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)>

**Cc:** Paul Seaton <[Representative\\_Paul\\_Seaton@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative_Paul_Seaton@akleg.gov)>; Gary Stevens  
<[Senator\\_Gary\\_Stevens@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator_Gary_Stevens@akleg.gov)>

**Subject:** HB 105 "An Act establishing the Gordon Haber Denali Wolf Special Management Area."

P.O. Box 2994  
Homer AK 99603

House Resources Committee  
Alaska State House  
Juneau AK

Dear Committee Members:

Denali National Park is one of the crown jewels of Alaska's National Parks, one that is on most visitors' list of "must see" places to watch wildlife, especially wolves. However, due to a lack of buffer around Denali National Park, a few local trappers have been allowed to trap in areas that were once protected, decimating Denali's highly visible wolf packs during the winter when they wander into these areas just outside the Park boundaries.

Wildlife viewing is a huge economic engine for Alaska. These wolves are far more valuable to Alaskans alive so that they can roam areas near the Park roads where visitors in buses can easily see and photograph them. Viewing opportunities have dropped significantly since the packs were trapped so heavily recently in the area designated in HB 105 as the "Gordon Haber Denali Wolf Special Management Area." Protecting this area from trapping and hunting of wolves will bring more visitor revenue to Alaska as the wolf packs rebuild and are once again available for viewing.

Establishing this special area will not greatly change hunting opportunities for many hunters, but it will have a huge impact on the health of wolf packs and the eventual improvement of wolf viewing within the park. This is a good idea that has already proven its worth when the area was protected in the past. It makes good economic sense to reinstate a protective buffer for wolves on the park boundary. I urge the Resources Committee to vote in favor of this bill.

Sincerely,

Nina Faust

**From:** [millimom@xyz.net](mailto:millimom@xyz.net) [<mailto:millimom@xyz.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2017 9:33 AM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** HB 105

Dear Representative Josephson,

Thank you, Thank you for introducing HB 105, to permanently protect that part outside Denali Park that needs protection for the wolves of the park. I had not been to the Park in many years, but visited last year. Our summer visitors come to see wolves and other wildlife, including my guests. The other wildlife was there, but not the wolves. I still recall taking my grandson about 12 years ago, and we saw wolves and he was so thrilled.

I strongly support this bill and hope it will pass the Committee.

Again, thank you.

Sincerely,

Milli Martin  
PO Box 2652  
Homer, AK 99603  
907-235-6652

**From:** Elizabeth Cuadra` [<mailto:cuadra@gci.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2017 10:42 AM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Geran Tarr  
<[Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Please Support HB 105

Denali wolves need the protection of HB 105. Alaska needs the tourism income, too. With a Board of Game that is so anti-wolves, it takes an act of the Legislature to get the right thing done.

Dorothy E. Cuadra, [cuadra@gci.net](mailto:cuadra@gci.net)

Resident at 9151 Skywood Lane, Juneau, AK (Alaskan since 1977)

**From:** Sean Cahoon [<mailto:sean.cahoon@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2017 12:11 PM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Geran Tarr  
<[Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** Support for HB 105

Dear Reps. Josephson and Tarr,

I am writing to express my support for HB 105 to establish a no-harvest buffer zone adjacent to Denali National Park and Preserve (DNPP). Under the current policy, wolves are under major threat of extirpation which could lead to cascading effects on ecosystem and landscape dynamics. Removal of wolves in other locations (Yellowstone NP) has rippled through the ecosystem and should be a warning of the harmful effects a declining population of keystone predators can have on landscape processes and ecosystem services. In addition to the ecological consequences, the chances of wolf sightings in DNPP has plummeted since the buffer zone was removed, reducing the quality of visitor experiences which could eventually lead to declining attendance and tourism-generated revenue. Wolves should be preserved for the benefit of all, not just a handful of hunters and trappers.

I look forward the advancement of this bill and hope you will prioritize this valuable and sustainable resource.

Sean Cahoon

**From:** Daniel Bissinger [<mailto:dan.bissinger@gmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 10, 2017 5:54 AM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** HB 105 - comment

Thank you for considering my comment on this important subject.

I would like to extend on my comment to the Board of Game I submitted on 2/2/17 apropos the comment period on the same topic:

Studies conducted by eminent biologists (Murie, Haber, Mech, Ripple and countless others, I'm sure) have shown that wolves have inhabited Denali National Park and interior Alaska for at least a thousand years. The work of a handful of hunters, trappers and wolf control programs have dismantled the right of wolves to live, and park visitors to view them in their natural habitat, in a matter of decades. In doing so, we as a people have demonstrated our inability to live in wilderness without destroying it.

HB 105 will likely configure the values of hiking, photography, camping, and enjoyment of wolf sightings to the preservation of wolf habitat. Perhaps even the wolf as a genetic reserve will be assessed, "a scientific yardstick by which we may measure the world in its natural balance against the world and its manmade imbalance" as Wallace Stegner once described in his "Wilderness Letter" regarding the role of our natural world.

Not only have we surrendered our synergy with wilderness, but we have also surrendered the "Wilderness Idea" as Stegner put it; 'a resource in itself... spiritual and mystical but perhaps incomprehensible to the practical minded who may regard anything that can't be moved with a bulldozer to be mystical'. Untampered wilderness, though, is every bit as spiritual and mystical as church; a place where we may recharge, find sanity, and feel insignificant, competent, vertical in the world, and look a long way. This is the same idea that human beings can live with other creatures without destroying them -- that we can assign value to wilderness beyond their economic uses and that we as people benefit from wilderness 'even if for ten years we never set foot in it, simply because it is there' and the knowledge that there is still perhaps something left untamed on Earth. We need wilderness as much as wilderness needs us, and we cannot have wilderness in parts. It exists only in whole with minimal human disturbance. When one species is eradicated, the entire ecosystem is imbalanced.

Trophic cascade is highly pertinent to ecosystems inhabited by wolves; the studies conducted in Yellowstone over the past 20 years have demonstrated this. They show us that animals are best managed by themselves, devoid of human involvement and most especially devoid of archaic predator control programs which were invalidated as effective management strategies several decades ago. There is absolutely no scientific basis for contemporary command-and-control programs. Studies have shown, for example, ("The Case Against Wolf and Bear Control In Alaska" Haber, 2006) that wolves have negligible effects on moose, caribou, and sheep



populations in Alaska and most often prey on the weakest animals -- half of the time not hunting but scavenging on carcasses from animals aged, diseased, or weakened by harsh winters. The predator-prey relationship keeps respective populations in check -- what Haber called "systems management". There are high biological, scientific, and ethical costs of killing wolves (Ibid.). By establishing a no hunting/trapping buffer adjacent to Denali National Park where wolves often travel and den, wolves can better serve the ecosystems they are entitled to inhabit, park visitors can enjoy them, and the 'Wilderness Idea' may be upheld.

Alaskans can do better.

We can live with wolves, enjoy them, and respect ourselves and appreciate life more fully. We can do this simply because of the knowledge that wolves exist and that we had a choice to exterminate them, again, but didn't.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comment and for your work spearheading the Haber Buffer.

--

(302) 383-5876  
[danbissinger@gmail.com](mailto:danbissinger@gmail.com)

**From:** selowe [<mailto:selowe@gci.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 09, 2017 1:08 PM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>  
**Subject:** I support HB 105 to protect wolves.

Hello Rep. Josephson:

I enthusiastically support HB 105 that would establish a no hunting/trapping area on state land adjacent to the northeastern boundary of Denali Park where wolves are targeted. It is shameful that Alaskans have allowed wolves to be persecuted for so long. We humans are not the only valid residents of our state that deserve respect. Our wild animals are a national and international treasure that draw millions of people throughout the world just to view them. I wish you every success in seeing this bill into action. Sharon Lowe

-----Original Message-----

From: Josh Klauder [<mailto:ravensong@mtaonline.net>]

Sent: Thursday, February 09, 2017 3:41 PM

To: Rep. Geran Tarr <[Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)>; Rep. Andy Josephson  
<[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>

Subject: Support for HB 105

Dear Representatives Josephson and Tarr,

Because I live remote, I will be unable to attend the hearing on this bill in person, at an LIO, or by phone.

Thus I am emailing to express my very strong support of this bill.

I live near Talkeetna. Our economy here is heavily dependent on tourism, and is intertwined with visitation to Denali by road, train, and air.

There are many good reasons for the establishment of this buffer, but the economics alone would appear to make it a simple and obvious choice.

Do we allow a small handful of trappers - who have lots of other options for places to trap- to continue to undermine the wildlife viewing opportunities for hundreds of thousands of visitors to our area who support our economy? The current situation is foolish and shortsighted in the extreme.

Please continue to do everything possible to create this conservation area.

Thank you,  
Josh Klauder  
Talkeetna