

**From:** [Thomas Atkinson](#)  
**To:** [Thomas Atkinson](#)  
**Subject:** FW: House Resolution No. 23  
**Date:** Friday, March 16, 2018 12:22:38 PM

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**From:** Jeff Judd  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 15, 2018 10:46 AM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson <[Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** House Resolution No. 23

Representative Josephson. Good morning. I am writing you this morning to provide information related to Resolution No.23, i.e., A Resolution supporting enhanced efforts to protect wildlife and domestic animals in the state from infectious diseases, foreign pathogens, and nonendemic parasites. My wife, Tina, as well as others support the intent of this resolution, but we believe that some background information would be helpful to you and other members of the legislature on this issue. If my assumption is correct, this resolution is being requested by the Wild Sheep Foundation as a result of their concern over a bacteria known as "Movi" and its possible impact on the wild sheep and goat population. The domestic farming community in Alaska acknowledges this issue and as Alaskans we share a desire to protect Alaska's wild species.

It is especially important that the legislature understand that the domestic farming community has been actively engaged and working with the ADEC, State Veterinarian's Office, ADF&G, Department of Agriculture, and the Farm Bureau on assessing the prevalence of Movi in both the domestic and wild sheep and goat population. ADEC, working with scientists at the USDA, have been completing a prevalence study, and working to understand the science behind Movi, its various genetic strains, and impact on both domestic and wild populations. As you might know, Movi in of itself does not cause a wild sheep or goat to become sick. It is only when combined with other stressers that it may trigger the animal to become sick. And recent scientific studies are proving that domestic and wild populations can actually shed the bacteria, and perhaps even via exposure to the bacteria, develop an immunity to the bacteria. We believe, as do the scientists that are working on studying this issue that it is important to understand the science behind the bacteria and its impacts, and whether it actually impacts the wild thin horn sheep and goat population. As of yet, Movi has only been proven to have impacted big horn sheep in the lower 48.

The domestic community participated in a Town Hall forum at the last annual State Board of Game meeting, and the domestic community is actively participating in a Working Group which includes representatives from ADEC, State Veterinarian's Office, ADF&G, Department of Agriculture, the Farm Bureau, and the Wild Sheep Foundation in an effort to work together as Alaskan's to find reasonable, effective solutions to both assess the risk, and if appropriate, reduce the risk even further.

As you may have also heard from those involved in the studies, and from Alaska's

domestic owners, conditions in Alaska vary greatly from those conditions in the lower 48 where Movi has been a more significant issue. We do not have public grazing lands adjacent to, or within, wild population areas. We already restrict the use of goats or sheep as pack animals for hunting purposes. Our domestic animals are generally localized in urban areas, not in mountainous area where wild populations exist. And the number of domestic animals in Alaska is limited, with estimates being in the several thousand range. After a significant volunteer effort by the domestic sheep and goat community over the past year, the prevalence study conducted by ADEC/USDA has shown that only ~4% of the domestic goat and sheep population tested positive for Movi (the percentage being slightly higher than 4% for sheep, and lower than 4% [~2%] for domestic goats.

As you likely have recently learned, ADF&G recently announced that testing results from a limited number of wild sheep and goats concluded that a small number of those wild animals tested positive for Movi exposure. They reported that the strain detected has NOT been tied to the genetic strain found in domestic animals. We simply do not know where or when the wild animals may have been exposed. It frankly could have been 100 years ago during the early days of colonization of Alaska when there were 10 times the number of domestic animals that supported the military and colony pioneers. It is also possible that the wild sheep were exposed from other wild animals that carry the bacteria, or the strain detected in the recent wild sheep is simply endemic to the wild sheep population. It is important to note that none of the wild sheep or goats were actually sick according to the ADF&G – a sign perhaps that they actually have developed an immunity to the bacteria which could actually make the wild sheep population stronger and less susceptible to the Movi bacteria in the future.

In summary, there is a great deal of science to be learned and an effort is underway and ongoing within ADEC and the USDA. The domestic community is actively participating and wishes to be part of a reasonable solution where appropriate. We are however frustrated that the Wild Sheep Foundation continues to violate the trust and agreement with the Working Group premises by continuing to push for legislative solutions before the scientific studies and risk assessment are completed, and attempting make end arounds during the very period they have agreed to work with the Working Group to find mutually agreeable solutions. It is unfortunate that this special interest group, largely made up of rich, out of state hunters, has the power and money to hire lobbyists to further their goals at the legislative level ahead of the science actually being completed and breaking from the premises and promises they have made to the Working Group members

I would be happy to discuss this issue more with you should you have the time.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Judd  
Wasilla, Alaska