

Comment on HB 105, creating a Denali Buffer Zone

A Denali Park Buffer Zone, near the area where tourists are most likely to observe wolves, is a timely and smart idea.

House Bill 105 would create a buffer zone on the northeast side of Denali Park, similar to a buffer that Alaska's Board of Game dissolved in 2010. The area in question, near a road in Denali Park, historically meant significant opportunity for tourists to have a high value viewing: wolves. The bill has passed the House. The Alaska Senate now has an opportunity to support gleaming the financial benefits to Alaskans, as we deal with a downturn in our economy.

It should not be necessary to spell out the huge benefits Alaskans receive from the tourism industry. Studies show that Alaska's major wildlife predators, along with moose, are at the top of wildlife viewing opportunities.

Tourism is a major economic benefit to Alaskans and not just to those in guiding outfits. Alaskans working in hotels, restaurants, transportation, gift shops, and as artists, photographers, writers, researchers and others who feature wildlife in their work all benefit. The dollars trickle into the pockets of Alaskan families.

Sponsor Josephson's argument is spot on: *"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,"* he wrote. *"Unfortunately, wolf viewing success has declined dramatically."* ... *Hunters and trappers kill about four wolves per year in the proposed buffer zone area...* The Alaska House of Representatives ultimately passed the bill.

It is now up to the Senate to act on this bill. Thank you, Senator Giessel, for scheduling this bill. Best wishes to members of the Senate Resources Committee as you consider the value of this bill to Alaskans.

Patricia OBrien - Juneau, Alaska



Credit: National Park Service Photos A telephoto lens helps capture a close up view of a wolf, even far from the park road



Wolf near Wonder Lake

Wolves can occasionally be seen right on the park road