March 10, 2019

Senator von Imhof;

This letter is to inform you of my past two experiences with the Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB) and my opposition to renewing the board for the 6-year period.

Three summers ago, in 2016, I filed a complaint with DNR over a guide land use permit in gross violation of his permit, LAS 29100. The permit allows for 3 tent platforms and an outhouse. At that time there were 5 platforms and a 1,000 square foot building on a foundation of 6x6 pilings, and trash left on site. I also made the BGCSB aware of the violations as well as the Alaska Wildlife Troopers.

The following summer on July 6, 2017 I went back to the site and found more trash, the building now had siding on it and the surrounding area had severe habitat damage from the ATV use there. DNR had not been to the site, the wildlife troopers had not taken any action on my original complaint and nor had the BGCSB taken any action. See attached photos of these 2016 and 2017 site visits. I have documentation from DNR that acknowledges violations of the permit stipulations based on my pictures of the second site visit. It is now 2019 and still no action from the BGCSB and as you may be aware this board has a history of whitewashing complaints brought in front of it.

My other contact with the BGCSB was years ago when I was the State of Alaska main witness in a same day airborne, wanton waste and hunter harassment case. While out in the field, a pair of guides dropped a note on my hunting partner and I stating, “move your plane or I will” among other threats. On that same flight, the guides spotted a ram from the air, landed, guided a non-resident hunter to the ram, killed it in direct view of us, and salvaged no meat.

At considerable expense, the state flew me up from Seattle (where I was going to dental school at the time) to testify on behalf of the state on the violations. I got to the meeting before the appointed time, early and was told by the state’s attorney and wildlife trooper that I was no longer needed as the BGCSB had made its decision already without hearing my testimony! The most telling part of this is that later after no action was taken by the BGCSB against these criminals the Alaska Professional Hunters Association made one of them their president.

Do not allow this whitewash campaign to continue by the BGCSB. Put the commercial hunters on notice that their inaction on serious violations must be punished by license suspensions or other sanctions deemed appropriate. In closing a two-year extension would provide a deadline and incentive for them to clean up the over 200 cases that have not been adjudicated.

Respectfully,

Robert Cassell