



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Alaska Board of Game

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April 1, 2019

Senator John Coghill
State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Senate Bill 87, Limit Nonresident Taking of Big Game

Dear Senator Coghill,

I am writing this letter on SB 87, a bill you recently introduced to amend AS 16.05.256, to express my opinion that no amendment is needed. The Board of Game (board) discussed sending a letter of concern on the bill during our recent meeting that concluded March 20, 2019 but did not make nor vote on a motion to do so. However, there was no objection from board members when it was requested I send a letter to the legislature.

Under SB 87, by changing “may” to “shall,” the board’s discretion to establish or maintain general season hunts for nonresidents will be eliminated whenever the board finds it is necessary to restrict nonresident taking of big game so the opportunity for state residents can be reasonably satisfied. Instead, the board would be required to provide nonresident opportunity by permit hunts.

The legislature delegated regulation hunting and trapping to the Board of Game and administration to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The legislature indicated a preference for residents in several instances, and the board and the department comply with that policy. For example, subsistence is restricted to Alaska residents only under AS 16.05.258. Licensing fees also are less expensive for residents than nonresidents under AS 16.05.340. The board considers AS 16.05.256, in its current form, to recognize a preference for residents in taking big game, consistent with constitutional principles of sustained yield management:

Sec. 16.05.256. Nonresident and nonresident alien permits. Whenever it is necessary to restrict the taking of big game so that the opportunity for state residents to take big game can be reasonably satisfied in accordance with sustained yield principles, the Board of Game may, through a permit system, limit the taking of big game by nonresidents and nonresident aliens to accomplish that purpose.

The Board of Game exercises its allocation authority with this policy in mind. The board also considers the constitutional requirement to provide maximum benefit to the residents, recognizing that benefits may come in many forms.

Approximately 70% of the income from licenses and tags paid to the state are paid by nonresidents. Residents have lower license fees and are exempt from some tag fees. When the board adopts regulations that impact allocation, the board considers the harvest opportunities as well as economic factors, with the overriding guidance found in the Alaska Constitution to manage on a sustained yield basis and to provide for the conservation, development, and utilization of game.

To illustrate why I believe no change in statute is warranted, in regulatory year 2017, 55,210 (94%) permits for big game were issued to residents and 3,410 (6%) were issued to nonresidents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "TED W. Spraker".

Ted Spraker, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game

cc: Members of the Senate Resources Committee