



unapologetically **FOR ALASKAN RESIDENTS**

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April 25, 2019

To: House Resources Committee

Re: CSSB 43 – Extend Big Game Commercial Services Board

Dear Co-chairs Tarr and Lincoln, and House Resources Committee members, Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) strongly **opposes** a five-year extension of the Big Game Commercial Services Board (Board), which is in the CS language from Senate Finance, amending the bill from a six-year to a five-year extension. We believe this extension is too long.

There is one salient overriding fact that has prevented this board from receiving anything near a full 8-year extension since coming out of sunset in 2005.

It wasn't just the board's debt, but the continued high number of complaints and violations and the backlog of investigative cases and timeliness of investigations that is in every single audit report: *"The audit concluded DCBPL needs to improve its ability to investigate cases timely. A review of board investigative activity found 233 cases were open or opened between July 2015 and May 2018, and 80 remained open as of May 2018. During this time, there were 145 cases open for over 180 days. Of the 145 cases, auditors reviewed a random sample of 22 cases and found 20 cases had unjustified periods of inactivity ranging from two to 18 months."*

That is from the 2018 audit and note that this same audit also states that "the prior recommendation [from the 2015 audit] to improve timeliness of investigations was not resolved." This same fact is in all the other previous audits.

In a letter to the Senator David Wilson, the sponsor of SB43, from Sarah Chambers, the Director of the Division of Corporations, Business, & Professional Licensing (DCBPL), dated March 10, 2019, in response to a request for more information regarding the investigative process of professional licensees, Ms Chambers states that: *"The concerns raised by the 2018 sunset audit of the Big Game Commercial Services Board is not that there are significant delays in investigations; it is that normal delays were simply not well-documented in our case management software during the 2015-2018 audit period."*

We do not see it that way. Neither did the most recent audit if the English language is interpreted correctly. Every sunset audit of this board since it was reinstated in 2005 has expressed concerns over the timeliness of investigations and caseloads for the one investigator who works for this Board. As Ms Chambers stated elsewhere in her letter, this high caseload *"is an unsustainable workload, which inspired our team to actively partner with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT) and criminal prosecutors to streamline the process."*

Nothing has changed in terms of caseload. The process has not been streamlined.

Think of it this way; if the Board were a business that was audited every three years – as this Board has been – for performance and every single audit expressed the same exact major problem ... well first off that's just not good business practice. Secondly, without repercussions there is no incentive to change.

That's why we firmly believe this Board should only receive a two-year extension. Show us they can fix the problem the last audit and all the previous audits addressed before receiving a longer or full extension.

Sincerely,
Mark Richards
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