

ALASKA

PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 240971 ~ Anchorage, AK 99524

Phone: (907) 929-0619 ~ (907)-868-1562

Email: office@alaskaprohunter.org ~ www.alaskaprohunter.org

February 5, 2020

Representatives John Lincoln & Geran Tarr
House Resources Committee
State Capitol Room 124
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Letter of Support for HB 230

Dear Chairmans Lincoln & Tarr and House Resources Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) to thank you for hearing *HB 230* and to express our support for the bill.

APHA is a statewide professional association representing Alaska's hunting guides. Our industry generates close to 90 million in annual economic activity while bringing more than 55 million in new dollars to Alaska's economy. Alaska's hunting guide businesses are 85-89% Alaskan owned with over half the active business owners living outside of major urban areas. Hunting guides rely on fair and predictable non-resident hunting opportunities allocated by the Board of Game. Non-resident hunting licenses and tag fees generate close to 75% of the revenue needed to fund the Division of Wildlife. APHA is a voice advocating for small Alaskan businesses that rely on sustainably managed hunting. I am proud of APHA's role in supporting necessary funding of wildlife conservation for the benefit of all users.

Intensive Management (IM) is a critical management tool for putting food on the table of Alaskans. IM is designed to prevent ungulate populations from declining to a level where they exist at low equilibrium with predator populations and cannot provide a harvestable surplus. While IM programs can include targeted predator removal, this is only one factor that can cause ungulate populations to crash. Other factors are extreme weather, habitat loss and degradation, and disease. Because Alaska has predator populations statewide it is critical that wildlife managers have the tools to adjust the ratios of predator to prey. Without these tools, human needs, most critically subsistence, will not be met. IM programs require extensive and exhaustive population assessments as well as analysis of the factors leading up to severe ungulate decline. If predation is determined to be either the cause of decline or projected to repress the ungulate population below habitat carrying capacity, then and only then will target removal of predators be incorporated into the final IM program.

Dedicated to the conservation of our wildlife resources.

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APHA supports the current IM surcharge of \$10 for residents and \$30 for non-residents because Pittman/Robertson (PR) funds cannot be used to fund IM. As recently as 2015, the legislature funded IM using UGF as CIPs. As part of a coalition, APHA worked with other Alaskan sporting groups in anticipation of the decline in UGF. The coalition rallied around Rep. Talerico's legislation (HB 137, 29th Legislature) to raise hunting license and tag fees. As part of that revenue package, that included doubling non-resident fees, the IM surcharge was created as a way of accounting for revenue used for IM. The IM surcharge provides "bright line" accounting for a minimum amount of revenue that "may" be used to fund IM in Alaska. Alaska's IM surcharge started out as an experiment, now it has become a critical revenue stream to support healthy and productive ungulate populations statewide.

APHA members are proud of their role day in and day out, season after season sustainably harvesting bears and wolves as part of their businesses. Guided hunters, especially in remote parts of our vast state, are often the only consistent harvesters of bears and wolves. These small guide businesses (50% of guide businesses take less than 10 hunters annually) are generally a net gain to the predator prey balance in favor of ungulates. This is to the benefit of resident hunters who overwhelmingly target ungulates for food. Hunting guides are a critical component to wildlife management in Alaska both leading up to and after IM plans have been adopted. APHA supports continued funding of IM and the removal of the sunset offered in HB 230.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sam Rohrer
President, APHA



unapologetically **FOR ALASKAN RESIDENTS**

PO Box 60095, Fairbanks, Alaska 99706 (907) 371-7436
email info@residenthuntersofalaska.org web www.residenthuntersofalaska.org

February 7, 2020

To: House Resources Committee

Re: HB 230 Repeal the termination date of the Intensive Management surcharge

Dear Chairs Tarr and Lincoln and members of the Resources Committee,

Resident Hunters of Alaska supported the recent hunting license fee increases as well as the Intensive Management (IM) surcharge for both residents and nonresidents. The IM surcharge is important to continue as the Pittman-Robertson 3:1 matching funds received from the federal government from the sale of hunting licenses and tags is not available to be used for predation control programs.

We recognize that our IM law is intended to benefit Alaskans who depend on moose and caribou to feed their families, that when certain game populations are low, predation control may be necessary to regrow herds. Nonresidents also benefit from successful predation control programs after populations are again within the IM population and harvest objectives and hunting opportunities are available again to all.

We fully support HB 230 to repeal the termination date of the IM surcharge.

Sincerely,

Mark Richards

Executive Director Resident Hunters of Alaska



Post Office Box 32712 • Juneau, Alaska 99803
Telephone: (907) 789-2399 • Fax: (907) 586-6020

Rep. Geran Tarr, co-chair
John Lincoln, co-chair
House Resources Committee

February 9, 2020

**RE: HB 230, A BILL REPEALING THE TERMINATION DATE FOR THE INTENSIVE
MANAGEMENT HUNTING LICENSE SURCHARGE**

Dear Representatives Tarr and Lincoln:

I am writing on behalf of the Territorial Sportsmen, Inc. (TSI) regarding HB 230, a bill repealing the termination date for the intensive management hunting license surcharge. TSI is a longstanding sportspeople's organization that has advocated in the interests of hunters, anglers, trappers, and other Alaska outdoor enthusiasts since 1945. TSI is based in Juneau and has approximately 1,500 members. TSI supports HB 230.

As I offered in my testimony to the House Resources Committee on February 5, I was employed for 30 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) as a wildlife biologist in Juneau, Sitka, Kotzebue, and Ketchikan, as SE Alaska's Regional Supervisor for wildlife, and as Assistant Director and Director of the Division of Wildlife Conservation. I retired in 2014.

Through my involvement with Intensive Management (IM) during my tenure with the department I am aware of the rationale for creating the 1994 IM law and the subsequent IM hunting license surcharge. As I testified to your committee, prior to the creation of the IM hunting license surcharge, funding to support the IM law and its required activities was provided by Legislative CIPs. However, as the State's budget coffers lessened, the IM surcharge was implemented as a way to make up for the lost CIP funding.

IM for moose, caribou, and deer involves a great deal more than targeting the reductions of

predators to benefit these ungulates, although predator reductions are certainly a part of the IM process as needs are deemed appropriate, practical, and achievable. More often than reducing predators through targeted actions, the department uses IM hunting surcharge funds to assess habitat in an effort to determine whether additional moose, caribou, and/or deer can be supported in specific areas identified for IM by the Alaska Board of Game. Additionally, IM hunting surcharge funds are used to enhance habitats, including through prescribed burns and scarification.

I provided your committee with the example of work my staff and I were directly involved with in Game Management Subunits 1A (near Ketchikan) and 1B (near Wrangell and Petersburg). In that work, assessments were done of the abundance and condition of existing plants important to the diets of moose and deer. Through that work it was determined that the condition and amount of the existing food plants was insufficient for supporting high levels of deer or moose in those areas at that time. As a result, considered efforts to decrease wolf numbers through active reductions was deemed inappropriate, thereby saving the State substantial amounts of money that could be better used for other IM efforts elsewhere within the state.

TSI's support for the IM hunting surcharge is directly linked to the knowledge that these funds provide the department with the necessary ability to implement the IM law, which includes assessing, evaluating, and possibly enhancing habitat in lieu of having to reduce predator numbers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important issue. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions or if TSI or I can be of service.

Sincerely,


Doug Larsen
President, Territorial Sportsmen, Inc.
(907) 321-0770