

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Chair: Legislative Budget and Audit, **Member:** Finance, Resources

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Official Business

Senate Bill 134 Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 134 clarifies under what conditions the Big Game Commercial Services Board would be required to revoke a Master Guide license. The bill corrects an unintended consequence due to different interpretations of language included in the board's last reauthorization bill.

The Big Game Commercial Services Board regulates the activities of professionals that provide guide, guide-outfitter, and transportation services to big game hunters. The board had a sunset review in 2018; Senate Bill 43 was introduced in 2019 to extend the board for five years. During deliberation on the bill, there was some frustration regarding the inability of the board to quickly take action to revoke the license of a Master Guide who had been convicted of criminal offenses. The board relayed that it had the ability to revoke the license, but the process had to be suspended during the criminal case, and the required investigation and due process was lengthy.

A Master Guide license does not confer any additional hunting rights; it is an honorary designation given to Registered Guides who have demonstrated excellence over a long history in their profession. Legislators, members of the public, and clients expect those that use the title to be held to the highest standard.

The Senate Finance committee added language that was intended to require revocation of a Master Guide license upon conviction in a court of law for criminal offenses related to the profession. This language was reviewed and approved by the full Senate, all subsequent committees, and the full House. Unfortunately, during the December BGCSB meeting, the language was reviewed by staff attorneys and there was concern that the statute could be construed to apply to any violation of the statute – even late paperwork – which was clearly not the legislative intent.

The BGCSB undertook a lengthy process to determine how to capture the legislature's intent: holding Master Guides to the high standard their title conveys and requiring the revocation of licenses for egregious offenses that do not honor the profession. Senate Bill 134 is the result of that work and would require revocation of a Master Guide license after conviction of an offense where the offender serves more than one day in jail or a \$1,500 or greater fine is imposed. It also conforms the qualifications for a Master Guide license to these standards and also requires that the guide has not had a similar license revoked within the past five years.

I would appreciate your support of this bill that clarifies the statute and ensures it works as the legislature intended.