

ALASKA

PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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February 4, 2021

Senator Revak
House Resources Committee
State Capitol Room 124
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Letter of Support for Senate Bill 22

Dear Senator Revak,

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) to thank you for sponsoring SB 22 and to express our support for the bill.

APHA is a statewide professional association representing Alaska's hunting guides. Our industry generates close to 92 million in annual economic activity while bringing more than 57 million in new dollars to Alaska's economy. Alaska's hunting guide businesses are 85% 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 76% 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 SB 22.

Thank you for your consideration,



Sam Rohrer
President, APHA