



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
ALASKA

House Resources Committee
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

The Alaska Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) represents some 1200 supporters and members across Alaska, consisting of passionate public landowners, hunters and anglers, guides, biologists, business owners and more. Our mission is to ensure our outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting, through education and work on behalf of wild public lands, waters, and wildlife. This letter is submitted as comments on House Bill 120 to address our concerns over the potential loss of a significant amount of public state land if this bill continues to move forward as written.

Several our members recently submitted written comments opposing the repeal of recreational rivers designations that was originally included in this bill, we thank you for removing that language. However, we still have significant concerns with the broad language in this bill allowing the state to reclassify land for disposal, as well the overall effect this bill would have on the net loss of state land. Specifically, amendments made to Section 14:

“...The department may identify land appropriate for commercial development from any or all of the following categories... public nominations under this paragraph are limited to one for each person and may not exceed 640 acres in size...”

“...any other state land the department deems appropriate for commercial development...”

“...If land identified in (b) of this section is classified in a manner that does not allow disposal of the land, the commissioner may classify or reclassify the land through a classification order under AS 38.05.300...”

This language is incredibly broad and essentially gives the commissioner of DNR the authority to reclassify any state land to be eligible for disposal and lease or sell up to 640 acres *per person*. This would create real problems with existing land use plans that have been created with significant public input and planning. Further, this bill effects the entire state and the potential for there to be a significant net loss of state land available for public access to hunting and fishing is real. Hunting, fishing, and trapping are lifestyles in Alaska and those lifestyles are incredibly valued. They also require vast amounts of intact, public land to allow people to participate.

We cannot support a bill that would facilitate the selling of our public lands for a net loss. We urge you to not move this bill forward or at a minimum, remove the broadly written language that grants excessive authority to sell off our public lands, and hunting and fishing lifestyles.

On behalf of the Alaska Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers,

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