

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Joe Meehan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 8:39 AM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Subject:** FW: Vote YES on HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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**From:** Sandra Zelasko [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 7:26 PM  
**To:** Joe Meehan <Joe.Meehan@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Vote YES on HB 321

Dear Joe Meehan,

Keep bears safe! HB 321 would enhance protections for the bears around McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and Refuge. An expanded statutory hunting closure to the areas adjoining the sanctuary would permanently elevate the sanctuary's distinction as one of the world's premier wildlife viewing destinations.

I have been drawn five times and have a love for McNeil SGS. Alaska needs to protect its wildlife and keep the tourist dollars coming.

Thank you in advance,

Sandy Zelasko  
Valley Center, CA

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Sandra Zelasko [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, March 23, 2026 7:01 PM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Subject:** Vote YES on HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

House Resources Committee,

Keep bears safe! HB 321 would enhance protections for the bears around McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and Refuge. An expanded statutory hunting closure to the areas adjoining the sanctuary would permanently elevate the sanctuary's distinction as one of the world's premier wildlife viewing destinations.

I have been drawn five times and have a love of McNeil SGS. Alaska needs to protect its wildlife and keep the tourist dollars coming.

Thank you in advance,

Sandy Zelasko  
Valley Center, CA

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** R. A. Youngs [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 5:12 AM  
**To:** House Resources; Rep. Andy Josephson; Joe Meehan  
**Subject:** HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi! Minnesotian here. Please protect the habitat of the bears. It is vital to their survival.

Besides being a "Friends of McNeil River" for years, I also purchase Alaskan fish every year, wear Alaskan t-shirts, and have extended family who visit your State EVERY year. They spend huge sums of money (like more than I live on for a year) in your State EVERY year. Among the many places that attract them to Alaska are the McNeil River, the Brooks range, and well, the entire State!

Please support protecting the Bears' habitat.

R.A.Y.

House Resources Committee: [House.Resources@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Resources@akleg.gov)  
Representative Andy Josephson: [Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov)  
Joe Meehan: [Joe.Meehan@akleg.gov](mailto:Joe.Meehan@akleg.gov)

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Nancy S. Wainwright <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 6:38 PM  
**To:** House Resources; Joe Meehan; Rep. Andy Josephson  
**Subject:** Please support HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear House Resources Committee Members, and Mr. Meehan and Mr. Josephson:

I am writing to urge you to support and pass HB 321 to extend closure to the McNeil River area Kamishak Lands between the McNeil River Sanctuary and Katmai National Park. This will enable the bears in the Sanctuary to have greater range in these areas that have been protected by bear hunting closures for years. This is particularly important that the Board of Game contemplates allowing bear baiting for hunting, and there is no assurance the Board will keep this area closed to hunting.

This legislation will ensure that the bears in this remarkable wildlife viewing area are protected for the people of Alaska, and the world, who travel to see the bears.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Wainwright  
[REDACTED]  
Anchorage Alaska 99508

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Kneeland Taylor <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 17, 2026 10:33 AM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Cc:** Rep. Andy Josephson; carolyn.hall@ak.leg; Sen. Matt Claman  
**Subject:** HB 321.

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I urge you to support HB 321. I am particularly interested in and support preserving Kachemak Bay. Specifically, it is my hope that Kachemak Bay and the inlets, that line the far side of the Bay be kept free of jet skis, and other high speed watercraft. I live in Anchorage but have vacationed in Kachemak Bay for dozens of years, and very strongly want to see it protected from ruination by people who want to go fast. Boats are fine, but not high speed boats. I love the birds, sea ducks, marine mammals etc. Thank you for considering my comments. Kneeland Taylor

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Lori Stender [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2026 11:02 AM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Cc:** Lori Stender  
**Subject:** HB 321 For McNeil River Sanctuary

**Follow Up Flag:** Flag for follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear House Resource Committee,

I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on some of the provisions in HB 321 that would enhance protections for the bears in and around the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and Refuge.

I am very supportive of the provisions in HB 321 that would close areas surrounding the McNeil River Sanctuary to brown bear hunting. Since the 1950s, brown bear hunting in the McNeil River system has been prohibited, allowing the Sanctuary to gain worldwide recognition as a premier wildlife viewing destination. This is a point of pride for Alaskans and an important contributor to the state's wildlife viewing economy. The areas around McNeil have functionally been closed to hunting for decades, and the bill's language will strengthen that longstanding protection for future generations while further enhancing the Sanctuary's value and stature. It will also reduce recurring Board of Game proposals to reopen these areas to hunting, which often generate significant public controversy and draw attention from across Alaska, the United States, and beyond.

Finally, this action demonstrates a balanced approach to wildlife management by supporting both consumptive and non-consumptive uses. It sends a clear message that Alaska is committed to responsible stewardship of its wildlife resources.

As a visitor to the McNeil River Sanctuary, I can attest to its value and benefit to future generations as an exceptional wildlife viewing area. Please support the HB 321 provisions for McNeil River Sanctuary.

Thank you,  
Lori J. Stender

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Kasey Mueller [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 5:59 AM  
**To:** House Resources; Rep. Andy Josephson; Joe Meehan  
**Subject:** Support for House Bill 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear Members of the House Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 321 and its provisions to enhance protections for the brown bears of the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and surrounding areas.

As a wildlife photographer and conservation advocate based in Idaho, I have spent years documenting species whose survival depends on thoughtful, science-based stewardship. Few places in the world represent that success as powerfully as McNeil River. Because of long-standing protections, this sanctuary has become one of the most extraordinary wildlife viewing destinations on Earth—on par with the Serengeti, the Galápagos, and Costa Rica’s rainforests.

The bears of McNeil River are not just a regional treasure—they are a global symbol of what is possible when we choose preservation alongside responsible use.

HB 321 takes an important and necessary step by extending existing hunting closures into the adjoining McNeil River Refuge and Kamishak lands. These areas are not separate from the sanctuary in any ecological sense; they are essential extensions of the bears’ habitat. Brown bears do not recognize administrative boundaries—they follow food sources, seasonal movement patterns, and generational instincts that have shaped their survival for centuries.

Without consistent protections across these connected landscapes, we risk undermining decades of successful management.

The proposed statutory protections reflect what has already been functionally in place for decades. Formalizing these closures will:

- Safeguard a globally significant bear population
- Reduce recurring and divisive efforts to reopen these areas to hunting
- Strengthen Alaska’s leadership in wildlife conservation
- Support a thriving wildlife viewing economy that depends on predictable, protected ecosystems

Equally important, this bill represents a balanced and forward-thinking approach to wildlife management—one that recognizes the value of both consumptive and non-consumptive uses. McNeil River stands as proof that conservation and economic benefit are not at odds; they are deeply interconnected.

At a time when biodiversity is under increasing pressure worldwide, places like McNeil are rare—and irreplaceable. The bears that gather there each summer are part of a delicate ecological story that has been allowed to continue, largely uninterrupted, for generations. HB 321 ensures that story does not end on our watch.

I respectfully urge you to support this legislation and help secure lasting protections for the McNeil River bears and the extraordinary ecosystem they represent.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to Alaska’s natural heritage.

Sincerely,  
Kasey Mueller  
Sandpoint, Idaho

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Rika Mouw [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 25, 2026 12:09 PM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Cc:** Joe Meehan; Rep. Andy Josephson; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Sarah Vance  
**Subject:** Letter of support for HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

### HB 321 STATE GAME REFUE, SANCTUARY AND CRITICAL HABITAT

Dear members of the House Resources Committee,

Thank you for considering the passage of HB 321 through this committee.

This is an important, strong and good bill in the effort to clarify and strengthen the protection and management of one of Alaska's strongest assets, the State of Alaska's wildlife refuges, sanctuaries and critical habitats.

Wildlife, water bodies, watersheds, intact ecosystems are precious resources for sustainability, subsistence, economic strength, hunting, fishing, recreation, and our quality of life. Alaskans and people from all over the world live here and come for its iconic landscapes, wildlife, and activities not available anywhere else.

As the years have passed since state lands were first designated, categorized and reserved for protection, changes have inevitably occurred that call for updating and adapting to more appropriate designations and levels of management, as well as expanding boundaries where adjacent areas can be included. This adds even more land to the state that are already designated for conservation/protection and can be absorbed by the state at no expense to the state.

I live in Homer and am familiar with the Cook Inlet/Kachemak Bay/Fox River Flats areas. This said, the areas beyond my personal familiarity are incredibly important, so I very much support **all the sections** included in this bill.

One area near and dear to my heart and those who live in Homer is the Beluga Wetland Complex, adjacent to the Homer Airport. The Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area is on the north side of the airport terminal and runway. There is more land owned by Kachemak Moose Habitat Inc. and the Kenai Peninsula Borough that is currently designated for conservation that can be included in the current area known as the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area. It is more appropriate to rename it as the Beluga Wetlands Wildlife Refuge and to give it the management status of a refuge. This area is getting renewed attention due to its growing value as habitat, peatlands, water retention for storm management services and water quality. This land is perfect for being included into a larger Beluga Wetlands Wildlife Refuge where moose, lynx, bears, birds, depend on winter and summer habitat. It is an asset for the City of Homer for open space, storm water management, birding tourism and quality of life. It is an asset for water quality flowing directly into Kachemak Bay. As our winter precipitation brings more and more rain,

these peatlands and wetlands offer flood protection. This area is asset for birding groups from all over the world, with huge numbers of birds that breed, nest, feed and rear in the Kachemak Bay region. Homer is a major stopping area for the Pacific Coast flyway.

McNeil River Wildlife Sanctuary is another area where extended boundaries of protection from brown bear hunting make tremendous sense. These bears are already very habituated to humans so protection in expanding the no hunting boundary makes abundant sense. These bears are integral as a keystone species in the overall health of an intact ecosystem.

HB 321 shows an awareness for adaption and the need for clarification in the managing structure for ***priceless and irreplaceable*** assets this state, country and world has.

This bill comes with minimal cost or expenses, and huge benefits.

I urge you to pass HB 321 through this committee to give it traction and action this session!

Thank you for your consideration.

Rika Mouw  
Homer, Alaska

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Nancy Lord [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 11:00 AM  
**To:** House Resources; Rep. Sarah Vance; Sen. Gary Stevens; Rep. Andy Josephson  
**Subject:** HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear committee members, Rep. Vance, Sen. Stevens, and Rep. Josephson,

I'm a Homer resident very familiar with all the areas listed below and very supportive of their additions, renamings, and changes included in the bill. Corrections to other refuge boundaries also seem like good public policy. Please move the bill forward!

Nancy Lord, [REDACTED]

1. Changing the titles of "game" refuge and critical habitat areas (CHA) to wildlife refuge (WR), and "game" sanctuary to wildlife sanctuary. It may seem unusual to call Kachemak Bay a wildlife refuge, but the goal is to make the terminology consistent. The statutory purpose and protections of the current critical habitat areas will remain unchanged.
2. Adding a small parcel to Kachemak Bay WR and some tidelands to the Fox River Flats WR, as these areas are missing from the current boundary.
3. Prohibiting personal watercraft in Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats WRs.
4. Expanding the Homer Airport CHA and renaming it the Beluga Wetlands WR.
5. Expanding the Anchor River Fritz Creek WR to include acquired parcels near the south end of North Fork Road.
6. Closing brown bear hunting via statute in areas adjacent to the McNeil River sanctuary (i.e., closing the McNeil River refuge and the Kamishak/Douglas River area).

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Chuck Heiting <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 24, 2026 6:25 AM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Subject:** HB321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

My name is Chuck Heiting, and I am a resident of Stratford, WI. I am writing to urge you to fully support HB321 and all subsequent legislation aimed at protecting and preserving the McNeil River sanctuary area.

Having visited this sanctuary, I have experienced firsthand what an amazing and special location it is. We have a collective duty to protect this incredible resource and the bears that inhabit it, ensuring the area is preserved for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and for your support of this important bill.

Sincerely,

Chuck Heiting

**Calvin Zuelow**

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**From:** Melanie Heacox <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 6:49 PM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Cc:** Joe Meehan; Rep. Andy Josephson  
**Subject:** Support for HB321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Date: March 29, 2026  
To: Alaska State Legislature, House Resources Committee  
From: Friends of Glacier Bay  
Re: Support for HB321

Friends of Glacier Bay (FOGB) is a non-profit organization centered in Gustavus, serving as a forum for the discussion, education and action on issues affecting Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

The Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area (CHA) is adjacent to Glacier Bay National Park. FOGB understands that the management for the CHA differs from that for the adjacent National Park. However, the intent of HB321 - with its goal of preserving wildlife habitat - is consistent with FOGB's mission to preserve ecological integrity and provide opportunities for solitude. The Dude Creek CHA currently supports critical wetlands for sandhill cranes and for many years has also provided Gustavus residents the opportunity to enjoy these lands for recreation such as hiking, bird-watching, and hunting.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and to help move this appropriate land designation forward for the benefit of wildlife and of present and future human generations.

Therefore, Friends of Glacier Bay enthusiastically supports the adoption of HB321.

Sincerely,

*Melanie Heacox*

Melanie Heacox, Secretary

Friends of Glacier Bay

P.O. Box 135

Gustavus, AK 99826

<https://www.fogb.org/>

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Sommers Cole <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 20, 2026 11:17 AM  
**To:** Rep. Andy Josephson; House Resources  
**Cc:** Joe Meehan; Kelsey Schober  
**Subject:** TNC Alaska HB321 Dude Creek Letter of Support  
**Attachments:** TNC-AK HB321 Dude Creek Letter of Support.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Representative Josephson, Co-chairs Frier and Dibert, and Members of the House Resources Committee,

Please find attached a letter of from The Nature Conservancy in Alaska (TNC-AK) regarding HB 321, specifically pertaining to the Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area and the adjacent lands referenced in the bill. TNC-AK supports the proposed boundary expansion described in the legislation, in line with the original intent of the land transfer from TNC to DNR. Please feel free to reach out with any questions and thank you all for the work you do on behalf of our great state and the people who live here.

Sincerely,  
Sommers Cole

**Sommers Cole**  
*Alaska Government Affairs Manager*



[nature.org](https://www.nature.org)

**The Nature Conservancy**  
416 Harris St.  
Suite 301  
Juneau, AK 99801  
United States of America



*I live and work on Tlingit Aani.*



# Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats

4900 Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Suite 106  
Palmer, Alaska 99654

March 18, 2026

To: Members of the Alaska State Legislature

Subject: **Support for House Bill 321 – State Game Refuge, Sanctuary and Critical Habitat Area Bill**

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

The Board of Directors of **Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats (APH)** respectfully writes in support of **House Bill 321**, which clarifies the management of Alaska's state wildlife refuges and sanctuaries while maintaining the public uses that are central to Alaska's outdoor traditions.

APH is a nonprofit friends group that supports the **Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge**. APH volunteers work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to promote stewardship, public access, and education within the refuge. Community partnerships helped develop Reflections Lake improvements, including an educational walking trail, elevated walkways, picnic areas, restrooms, and a wildlife viewing tower. APH has also organized annual cleanups, trail maintenance, and family wildlife education events that connect residents and visitors with the Refuge.

HB 321 strengthens refuge management by providing clearer naming consistency among Alaska's special areas and reaffirming that the primary purpose of wildlife refuges is to protect fish, wildlife, and habitat values. At the same time, the bill confirms that traditional public uses—including hunting, fishing, trapping, subsistence activities, wildlife viewing, and outdoor recreation—continue to be allowed and managed through regulation. APH also supports provisions that improve the practical management of refuge lands. The bill corrects legal descriptions, incorporates conservation lands within refuge boundaries into refuge jurisdiction, and clarifies the administration of lands within refuge boundaries. These updates will help ensure that Alaska's refuges are managed efficiently and transparently.

For **Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge**, these provisions are particularly important. The refuge is one of Southcentral Alaska's most accessible wildlife areas and supports migratory birds, salmon habitat, and year-round recreation for both Mat-Su and Anchorage residents. Clarifying refuge jurisdiction for conservation lands within the refuge boundary will help ensure these lands are well managed while continuing to support responsible public access and wildlife viewing.

For these reasons, **Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats respectfully supports House Bill 321** and encourages its passage. Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,

*John F. Harris Jr.*

**John F. Harris Jr.**, President  
Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats  
Email: [REDACTED]

**tele: (907) 357-8711 fax: (907) 357-8713**

**email: [palmerhayflats@gmail.com](mailto:palmerhayflats@gmail.com) website: [www.PalmerHayFlats.org](http://www.PalmerHayFlats.org)**



Adrienne Christensen, Chief Operating Officer  
Alaska Peninsula Corporation  
2710 Wesleyan Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99508

Representative Robyn Frier, Co-chair  
Representative Maxine Dibert, Co-chair  
House Resources Committee

March 16, 2026

RE: Support of certain provisions in House Bill 321 "Fish and Game Wildlife Refuges."

Dear Co-chairs Frier and Dibert:

The Alaska Peninsula Corporation represents the Alaska Native Village Corporations for Port Heiden, South Naknek, Ugashik, Kokhanok, and Newhalen. I am writing in support of certain provisions in House Bill 321 "Fish and Game Wildlife Refuges." Specifically, we support the bill section that removes Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) land management authority over Port Heiden Village Corporation lands within the Port Heiden Critical Habitat Area (CHA), which is also proposed to be renamed the Port Heiden Wildlife Refuge. While we support ADF&G's efforts to manage fish and wildlife resources in the CHA, we do not want to be subject to land use and permit requirements imposed by the CHA regulations and management plan policies as we are capable of appropriately managing our own lands.

We also support the provisions of this bill to correct CHA and refuge boundary errors; to consolidate the area titles to wildlife refuges and sanctuaries; and to help clarify the purposes of these areas to protect habitats and uses of fish and wildlife resources in these areas.

Please support this bill and pass it along for a full house vote. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Christensen, Chief Operating Officer

Alaska Peninsula Corporation

## Calvin Zuelow

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**From:** Joe Meehan  
**Sent:** Monday, March 30, 2026 8:02 AM  
**To:** House Resources  
**Subject:** FW: HB 321

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Elarth Adams <a [REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 10:33 PM  
**To:** Joe Meehan <Joe.Meehan@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** HB 321

Dear Sir

Please vote yes on HB 321, extending the protection of the area surrounding the McNeil River Bear Sanctuary. It is a vital area, for not only the bear watching but for all animals therein.

Thank you.

Elizabeth V. Allen

Kenai, Alaska

Sent from my iPhone

HB 321 Comments  
2026-03-20

To:  
Alaska House Resource Committee  
Representative Andy Josephson

Dear Committee Members:

I support HB 321 as written for the reasons below and ask you to do the same. While I am not familiar with all of the lands mentioned in this bill, I will comment on the areas that I am familiar with.

**Overall, this bill does many important things including:**

Clarifying habitat protections

Promotes public safety, i.e. no target shooting at trail heads.

Resolves administrative issues by fixing boundaries and incorporating lands that have been added to existing areas like Creamer's Field.

Saves money by allowing for more effective and efficient budgeting and man power requirements

**McNeil River State Game Refuge and Kamishak Bay Special Use Area.** I support the permanent closure of these lands as described in HB321. This is long overdue. My history of area use goes back more than 20 years both as an individual and a commercial wildlife viewing guide.

These areas and the adjoining lands of the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary and Katmai National Park and Preserve are important to brown bears for food, mating and denning. In two studies, one in 1989 the other in 2003 and 2004, bears were collared with GPS locators or ear tags. The results of these studies showed that McNeil River bears go as far as 71 miles from the falls at other times of the year. For example, two bears collared at Douglas River in the spring of 2003 and 2004 migrated to McNeil falls, fished several days then continued to Katmai Preserve in the fall.

Besides the scientifically validated results, many of the easily recognizable "McNeil bears" were photographed by current or former sanctuary staff and myself in McNeil Refuge, Kamishak River, Douglas River, Kulik River, Amakdedori beach as well as Funnel and Moraine Creek in Katmai Preserve.

This entire area is an economic driver for Homer bear viewing businesses, lodging, eateries and fly-in lodges around Lake Iliamna. These areas are very special, by that I mean special like the mountain gorillas are to Rwanda a 'crown jewel' that people have on their bucket list to visit and see. And just like the mountain gorillas these areas should have more protection due to the popularity of bear viewing and it's impacts on brown bears. The areas many beaches and small lakes make this area readily accessible to aircraft and currently lack these areas lack adequate habitat protections and enforcement.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Respectfully,

David Bachrach

[Redacted signature block]