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HOUSE BILL 201

RESIDENCY REQ: HUNTING, TRAPPING, FISHING Version U

“An Act changing the residency requirements for hunting, trapping, and sport fishing privileges; and providing for an effective date.”

SPONSOR STATEMENT (Updated 6.12.23)

House Bill 201 RESIDENCY REQ: HUNTING, TRAPPING, FISHING aligns requirements for an individual to receive a resident hunting, trapping, or sport fishing license with the requirement to receive a Permanent Fund Dividend (AS 43.23). This will have the effect of limiting the amount of time and reasons one can be absent from the state and still qualify for a resident license while at the same time making residency requirements easier to enforce. With the increased pressure on our limited fish and game resources, it is important to ensure that those who enjoy the lower cost and increased bag limits associated with a resident license are, in fact, full-time residents of the State of Alaska.

The current definition of residency is too broad and difficult to enforce. Currently, individuals can qualify for a resident license and be indefinitely absent so long as they meet the low threshold of intending to remain in Alaska, maintaining a domicile in Alaska, and not establishing residency elsewhere. Someone who is away from Alaska for most of the year but still currently qualifies as a resident has the same access to our finite fish and game resources as someone who lives in the state 12 months of the year.

Regrettably, some of Alaska’s fish and game resources are not as robust as they once were. When there are fewer fish and game resources to go around it is that much more important to maintain sufficient resources for those who are full-time residents of the state and reduced access for those who harvest fish and game in Alaska and then take the resource out of state. Allowing greater access to fish and game resources for year-round residents of Alaska who invest in their communities in all seasons will ensure that individuals and communities who depend most on the resource will have access.

HB 201 does not prohibit out-of-state hunters or fishermen from coming to Alaska to participate in the state’s well-managed hunts and fisheries. Guided hunting and fishing industries are an important part of Alaska’s economy. Under this legislation, visitors will still be able to obtain non-resident permits without additional restrictions. HB 201 ensures that those who qualify for a resident hunting, trapping, or sportfishing license are in fact year-round residents of Alaska and are deserving of the increased bag limits and reduced costs that are the privilege of state residents.