

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Official Business

House Bill 396

Big Game Guide Concession Area Permit Program

SPONSOR STATEMENT

For years, overcrowding of commercial hunting operations on state lands have resulted in decreasing incentives for guides to act as stewards of our public trust resources. While federally managed lands in Alaska have successful hunting guide concession programs, there is no process by which the commercial use of state land is allocated and no limits on the number of commercial hunting guide operations that can operate in these areas. The current unregulated situation incentivizes guides to aggressively “race for the game” thereby decreasing quality of experience for guided clients, increasing conflicts between commercial users, and disadvantaging resident hunters and subsistence hunters.

This bill seeks to solve a long-standing problem on state lands by implementing a constitutionally sound concession program to limit the number of commercial hunting guide operations on state lands in Alaska. The key features of the program include a competitive process that ensures qualified individuals and new entrants to the market are selected, a 10-year concession duration that requires all applicants (including incumbents) to compete for each concession area on an even playing field; transferability conditions; heightened ability for state enforcement of wildlife laws; and an equitable fee structure that will allow the state to adequately maintain the program.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation which will put in place a proven mechanism to improve the quality of hunting on state lands to the benefit of all Alaskans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom W. McKay".