



ALASKA FARM BUREAU, INC.

Bryce Wrigley, President
bjwrigley@gmail.com

Amy Seitz, Executive Director
amy.seitz@gmail.com

April 13, 2018

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senate Resources Committee
State Capitol Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Giessel:

The Alaska Farm Bureau agrees with the idea in CSHCR 23 of encouraging agencies to protect wildlife and domestic animals and we appreciate the amendments made in House Resources. It is important with this resolution to note if the intent is to encourage agencies to gather information and make science-based management decisions with necessary and prudent measures put in place, or is it to encourage enhanced efforts to take actions to prevent the spread of diseases and pathogens.

There can be significant differences between the two possible intents. With the current Movi issue, these agencies are taking necessary and prudent steps to gather Alaska specific information in order to take appropriate actions to minimize the risk of disease outbreaks. Enhancing efforts and taking actions to prevent spread of disease and pathogens can be a more extreme approach. Had actions been taken to "prevent" the spread of Movi from domestics to wildlife before conducting the current study we're doing, we probably wouldn't have learned that Movi is already in the wild populations. It has been detected in the Brooks Range where it is most likely not due to contact with a domestic sheep or goat.

While this resolution may seem harmless, and it is good for the legislature to encourage agencies to do their job, we're concerned that it's being used to push a very extreme and costly agenda; mandatory testing, Movi testing for imports, having an "Movi Free" Alaska. To go "Movi free" will be extremely costly to Alaska and our producers. There are very few diseases that have been eradicated; a disease recently declared eradicated (rinderpest) took a world wide effort multiple decades to accomplish. This was a very harmful disease to multiple species. Movi is an incompletely understood bacteria, we need to understand it better before trying to go "Movi free".

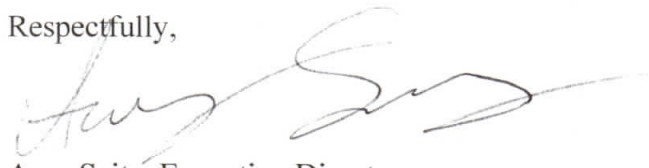
Another part to carefully consider in HCR 23 is the whereas referencing the "catastrophic die-offs" in North America due to diseases. While Movi played a role in the Bighorn sheep die-offs, there were several factors involved including drastic loss of habitat due to urban expansion, also a 10 year drought that further reduced access to food. It is true that diseases and pathogens can result in costly and problematic die-offs in both domestic and

wild populations, but use of “catastrophic die-offs” is an attempt to get a fear based decision made.

Before Senators offer their support for this seemingly harmless resolution, we urge you to really consider what the intent should be. The Alaska Farm Bureau does support protecting our wild and domestic animals with appropriate steps that are justified with facts and science. We do not support taking extreme actions to try and reach zero risk of spreading pathogens; zero risk is unattainable.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Amy Seitz', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Amy Seitz, Executive Director
Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc