



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Alaska Board of Game

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April 7, 2016

Senator Anna MacKinnon, Co-Chair, and
Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for House Bill 137 concerning hunting, trapping, and sport fish fees

Dear Senators McKinnon and Kelly:

As Chairman of the Board of Game (Board), I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you the concerns expressed by the Board on issues related to the ability of the Department of Fish and Game to carry the increasing resource management demands being placed on the agency. Particularly, the Board is concerned about the Division of Wildlife Conservation's (division) funding and the need for additional funds should the existing general funds in the division be significantly reduced. By all accounts, those funds will decline which brings us to the only practical solution which is the need for license increases.

The Board is concerned that the division stands to lose federal aid dollars if they are unable to match the Pittman-Robertson funds available to the state. Presently the state's obligation of federal matching dollars is way short of the funds available for matching at a 3:1 federal to state matching ratio. Obviously, additional fish and game fund dollars are necessary to take advantage of the existing Pittman-Robertson funds available.

Unfortunately a portion of federal matching funds may not be used for certain aspects of the intensive management programs already on the books, as well other division programs not eligible for federal matching dollars. Thus, the only rational solution is to support license increases and the surcharge to fill in the financial gap. Since hunting and trapping license fees have not been raised since 1993, the timing seems appropriate and justified to seek increases this year.

The Board of Game supports House Bill 137 concerning hunting, trapping and sport fish fees to increase support for Department of Fish and Game management programs. I believe the support among the State's user public for the inclusion of an intensive management surcharge to ensure important management programs for hunting continue is vital to the acceptance of this legislation. It is an innovative method for directing management efforts, and with a sunset provision allows for evaluation in the future to ascertain if the surcharge should continue.

If we can assist in any way in the legislative process, we stand ready and willing to participate.

Sincerely,



Ted Spraker, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game

cc: Representative Dave Talerico, State House District 6
Commissioner Sam Cotten, Department of Fish and Game
Bruce Dale, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation