



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

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February 10, 2025

The Honorable Cathy Giessel  
Chair, Senate Resources Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 121  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Chair Giessel:

During the hearing on SB 29: Big Game Commercial Services in the Senate Resources Committee on February 3, 2025, we agreed to follow-up with some information we did not have on hand at the time. The question from the committee member and the follow-up response is below.

**Senator Claman asked, “Any idea why we’re seeing growth in the number of licensees under the Big Game Commercial Services Board?”**

It is important to know that growth in the number of licenses doesn’t *necessarily* mean growth in the industry or the number of people in the field. We do not collect data on where or whether licensees are working.

We reached out to former board chair and registered guide-outfitter, Jason Bunch, who offered his insights on the reasons for the growth in the number of licensees.

We are seeing a pretty big increase in young people traveling to Alaska to hunt. This could be due to a lot of different social aspects including post corona virus change in mindset, people are saying, “might as well be adventurous! You never know when your time is up.” Another could be social media. There’s a lot of social media showing wild adventure type Alaskan trips. Folks are more willing today to spend their savings on an adventure unlike their parents’ who saved for retirement and, in some cases, passed on opportunities only a younger person can physically perform. Social media also seems to have a big impact on people’s mindset of chasing their dream job. If you combine these three social factors together it could be what is influencing the 15 percent increase in licensure.

The last thing to add to this is that state land allows for an infinite number of guides to provide services on it. With this being the case, there is limited barrier to entry for these folks who want to try their hand at a guide business.

For context, the table below shows the number of total licenses and new licenses by license type for the Big Game Commercial Services Board in FY2024.

| <b>License Type</b>      | <b>FY2024 Total Licenses</b> | <b>New Licenses in FY2024</b> |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Assistant Guide          | 999                          | 100                           |
| Class-A Assistant Guide  | 112                          | 5                             |
| Register Guide-Outfitter | 359                          | 17                            |
| Master Guide             | 114                          | 0                             |
| Transporter              | 162                          | 25                            |
| Total                    | 1746                         | 147                           |

Please let us know if the committee has any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Sylvan Robb  
Director

cc: Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office  
Lizzie Kubitz, Legislative Liaison, DCCED