

## SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Bill 186

Wood Bison

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Wood bison are an endangered species .The only herd of Wood bison in the whole United States resides in the Wildlife Conservation Center in Portage, AK awaiting release. They have been promised a 10-J exemption to the Endangered Species Act.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game has planned for years to introduce those bison into the Innoko River drainage, close to the villages of Shageluk, Anvik, Holy Cross and Grayling.

The people of that area have cooperated with ADF&G, unaware of the potential long-term, irreversible impact of introducing an endangered species.

The Federal Government has never passed up on an opportunity to lock up Alaskan lands. Environmental groups are not likely to wait long before filing litigation against the 10-J exemption.

The history of Federal and State governments, combined with the unwavering assault against development in Alaska by environmental groups makes the introduction of an endangered species an extremely risky venture that should not be undertaken without serious deliberation. This is not a scientific issue, nor a food issue. It is a totally political issue with grave long-term consequences for any region of the state.

This bill does not prohibit the introduction of the Wood Bison. It simply requires that the introduction occur with permission of the Alaska State Legislature. This safeguards people of any area of Alaska from the introduction of Trojan Bison without fully informed counsel.

In 40 years of conflict in the Delta Junction area the State of Alaska has done very little to resolve the unintended consequences that occurred from the introduction of Plains bison into the region in the 1920's. The unintended consequences that will result from the introduction of Wood bison into the Innoko area will be much more significant than those in the Delta area. Those who think they will be eating Wood bison in ten years will more likely become embroiled in a lawsuit within two.