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January 29, 2014

Representative Lynn Gattis
Alaska State House
120 4th St. Rm 420
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Gattis:

I would like to personally thank you for introducing HB 161 related to the issuance of Governor's Permits. This Legislation will accomplish two major goals of the angling, hunting and trapping public. First it will set the rate of return on the use of these permits at a level making them much more attractive to qualified non-profits. Right now the available tags are not all being used as the 10% return on their use to a non-profit isn't sufficient to warrant their use.

By increasing the percentage a non-profit may keep, more of them will participate thereby increasing the amount of available revenue to the conservation of our wild renewable resources. Furthermore, more interest will be given to these permits as the new language requires consultation between the non-profit raising the money and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. This provision will hopefully give more alignment between concerned sportsmen and the Department on management issues.

The second issue of importance in HB 161 is the official definition of the North American Model for Wildlife Conservation. The issue of who manages wildlife in each state is coming to the forefront and this 100 plus year old model is coming under attack by federal agencies. Recently in a meeting between the Western State Directors of Fish and Game Departments and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Directors were told that the Model was broken and the feds would be taking over. Worse yet, the threat of using the Endangered Species Act against states to get them to comply with this federal takeover was leveled by the Director of the USFWS.

HB 161 was discussed by the Legislative Outdoor Caucus Advisory Council a couple of weeks ago and the consensus was that it would be our primary goal that this legislation pass this year. Present at the meeting were representatives from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ruffed Grouse Society, SCI Alaska Chapter, SCI Kenai Chapter and the Sportsman's Conservation Alliance PAC. Since that meeting I have been in discussions with my counterparts in the leadership of the NRA from Fairfax, VA and they are supporting your bill also.

Nationally, aside from the NRA, I am also working with the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses and the Wild Sheep Foundation to counter the increasing federal overreach into the states' traditional role as the lead manager of our fish and wildlife resources. Your bill will help solidify our commitment to upholding the North American Model and the primacy of state management.

If there is anything I can do to assist you in the passage of this landmark bill, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Eddie Grasser".

Eddie Grasser
SCI Vice President
Chair SCI Gov't Affairs Committee on State Affairs

cc: House Resources Committee Members
Legislative Outdoor Heritage Caucus Members