

Senator Charlie Huggins,

My name is Joey Klutsch, Registered Guide 1277, and I am writing to express my full support of SB 190 and thank you for sponsoring it. I have been in the guiding business my entire life. I grew up in it, working for my way from the bottom up. I starting as a packer and paid my dues, became an Assistant Guide, a Class- A Assistant and finally earned my Registered Guide License. I was taught by the best and now for the first time I am running my own guide operation with my own Federal Permits. I feel that as a young guide I represent the future of guiding in Alaska. However, guiding in Alaska will have no future if there is not a way for people to work their way up, the way myself and so many others did, or if there is no way for Registered/Master Guides to hire the employees needed to run a quality guiding business.

It is essential that the state of Alaska stops overregulating the guiding industry. The latest issue regarding "packers" and what they can and cannot do is a perfect example. If contracting guides are not able to employ packers that can perform duties traditionally associated with the job, it will be impossible to run a viable guide business. It will also become very difficult to work your way up in the business in a way that is economically feasible. Why would anyone ever want to sign on as an "apprentice or packer" and not be able to do ANYTHING of use or value for the employing Registered/Master Guide, and have to "work" in that capacity for several seasons just to earn their Assistant Guide license? What is worse in this example, if an individual were to finally earn their Assistant Guide license, they would have virtually none of the necessary skills required to be a guide, because they did not and could not (legally) learn them while acting as a packer. The packer position is a necessary training step to becoming a guide. Simple as that.

Being a packer for several years and then becoming an Assistant Guide is how most people including myself got into the business. Taking away a packer's ability to do his traditional job without "over supervision and regulation" will completely eliminate all of the learning involved, which will in turn will lead to fewer qualified Assistant Guides. This will spell ruin to the industry. As I have said, how can one gain the proper experience to become an Assistant Guide if one is not able to work at some level of independence and perform certain tasks (spotting game, judging animals, client relation skills, hide care, meat care, setting up camp, and so much more) that are essential to being a guide? It is for these reasons that SB 190 is so critical, and I am so thankful that you have taken the time to sponsor it.

Thank You again for your efforts, and for supporting the guiding industry.

Sincerely,

Joey Klutsch

Registered Guide 1277