



BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS ALASKA CHAPTER



February 24, 2014

To: House Resources Committee
RE: HB 161

We oppose HB 161, including the amended Version Y. There are many aspects of this proposed legislation we find troubling, and this action would set alarming precedent for tag disbursement in Alaska.

We do not want to see Alaska become another Utah, where resident opportunity has taken a back seat to the misguided practice of selling or gifting a resource that truly belongs to the residents of the state.

We are aware that the Division of Wildlife Conservation does not have the funding to carry out the numerous programs and projects it oversees. For the last 8 years now we have been pushing an increase in hunting license and tag fees for both residents and nonresidents. The last increase was in 1993 and Alaska, where costs run so much higher than the lower 48, charges by far the least amount among all the western states to residents and nonresidents alike for hunting licenses and tags.

We are pleased that the legislature has taken note of funding shortfalls and wants to see more monies go into wildlife conservation. However, this bill is not the way to accomplish that goal.

It is a telling fact that mention of the North American Model of Wildlife Management (NAM) was struck from this legislation. NAM is all about democracy in hunting. The resource belongs to all equally. Wealthy hunters should not get a preference.

This legislation would add a new sheep tag to *donate* to an organization to auction off. It also gives the ADFG Commissioner the authority to hold that hunt outside normal seasons. Think about how much such a tag and hunt would sell for at auction. What uber-wealthy sheep hunter would not be willing to pay a half million dollars to go on an Alaskan sheep hunt on August 1st, ten days before the normal season, the entire mountain and any

legal rams all to himself? In addition, since this new sheep tag is donated, the organization that auctions it off gets to keep 100% of those funds. How does that remotely help our Fish and Game coffers?

This legislation is the slipperiest of slippery slopes. It will undeniably take opportunities away from resident hunters. It started just this way in Utah. Non-profit hunting organizations saw how much money it could bring in to them and so they pushed for more tags to be allocated. Now over 200 tags are allocated and auctioned off in Utah.

It was mentioned by the sponsor of this bill that from 2009 – 2013, 460,000 dollars in revenue from governor's tags was generated. That's great and we certainly don't oppose the way we currently allocate those tags or the 10% profits that 501c3 orgs are allowed to keep.

We have attached with this letter a copy of the Alaskan Auction and Raffle Permits 2014-2015. As far as we can tell, every single governor's tag offered under current statute will be up for auction at various venues by non-profit hunting and conservation organizations. Comments that that there isn't interest, or that these organizations need a larger cut of the proceeds, doesn't seem to jibe with reality.

Let's not set this precedent and allocate more tags for the wealthy while disavowing the North American Model of Wildlife Management. We don't need to change anything about the current statutes relating to governor's tags.

Sincerely,

Alaska Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
www.alaskabackcountryhunters.org

Alaska Auction and Raffle Permits 2014-15

| Auction Tag | Organization and Contact | Event Location and Date |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Big Game Program</i> | | |
| Bison (Copper River D1454) | Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (Eastern) Jim Wilson (717) 435-8023 | 23rd Annual Hunting and Outdoor Expo Lancaster County Convention Center, Lancaster, PA February 14-16, 2014 |
| Bison (Delta D1405) | Alaskan Bowhunters Association (Alaska) Gary Keller | 36th Annual Awards Banquet & Fundraiser Coast International Inn, Anchorage, AK April 5, 2014 |
| Brown bear (Nome DB685-690) | Ruffed Grouse Society (South Central Alaska Chapter) Mike Griffin (907) 257-9499 | 22nd Annual RGS Sportsman's Banquet Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK March 30, 2014 |
| Brown bear (Unimak Island DB375-376) | Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (Utah) Byron Bateman (801) 479-1604 | Western Hunting and Conservation Expo Salt Palace, Salt Lake City, UT February 13 - 16, 2014 |
| Caribou (Kenai, Fox River DC618) | Alaska Trappers Association Keith Bayha (907) 223-1993 | Bistro 36, Golden Lion Hotel Anchorage, AK October 26, 2013 |
| Dall sheep (Tok Mgt Area DS102) | Alaskan Bowhunters Association (Alaska) Gary Keller | 36th Annual Awards Banquet & Fundraiser Coast International Inn, Anchorage, AK April 5, 2014 |
| Dall sheep (Western Chugach DS123) | Wild Sheep Foundation (National) Gray Thornton (307) 527-6261 | 2014 Sheep Show Reno-Sparks Convention Center, Reno, NV January 22-25, 2014 |
| Moose (Fairbanks 20A DM769) | Alaskan Bowhunters Association (Alaska) Gary Keller | 36th Annual Awards Banquet & Fundraiser Coast International Inn, Anchorage, AK April 5, 2014 |
| Moose (Koyukuk CUA DM823-830) | Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (Utah) Byron Bateman (801) 479-1604 | Western Hunting and Conservation Expo Salt Palace, Salt Lake City, UT February 13 - 16, 2014 |

Last Updated on Monday, October 8, 2013

Prepared by: Alaska Chapter Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

| Auction Tag | Organization and Contact | Event Location and Date |
|---|---|--|
| Musk ox (Nunivak Island DX001-003) | Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (Eastern) Jim Wilson (717) 435-8023 | 23rd Annual Hunting and Outdoor Expo Lancaster County Convention Center, Lancaster, PA February 14-16, 2014 |
| Musk ox (Nunivak Island DX001-003) | Ruffed Grouse Society (South Central Alaska Chapter) Mike Griffin (907) 257-9499 | 22nd Annual RGS Sportsmen's Banquet Anchorage Hilton Hotel, Anchorage, AK |
| Auction Tag | Organization and Contact | Event Location and Date |
| <i>Delta Bison Program</i> Bison (Delta D1405) | Outdoor Heritage Foundation of Alaska Eddie Grasser (907) 745-0358 | SCI Alaska - Hunter's Expo and Sportsmen's Banquet Dena-ina Convention Center, Anchorage, AK February 22, 2014 |
| Auction Tag | Organization and Contact | Event Location and Date |
| <i>Etolin Elk Program</i> Elk (Etolin Island DE318-323) | Devil's Thumb Archers (Alaska) Dan McMahon (907) 772-3584 | Annual Banquet Jack Hicks Memorial Archery Range, Petersburg, AK July 15, 2014 |