

NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH
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March 20, 2014

Honorable Cathy Giessel
Chair, Senate Resources Committee
State Senate
Alaska State Capitol, Room 427
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Senate Bill (SB) 160: An Act authorizing the commissioner of natural resources to implement a hunting guide concession program or otherwise limit the number of individuals authorized to conduct big game commercial guiding on state land

Dear Senator Giessel:

On behalf of the Northwest Arctic Borough, I wish to express my strong support for SB 160. This bill provides authority for the commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources to develop a guide concession program. The Department has been working on a management framework for this program for a number of years, and it has incorporated public comments from meetings held throughout the state. This program would provide the Department with an important tool to manage hunting pressure on state lands.

As I travel throughout the 11 communities of the Borough, residents emphasize the importance of user conflicts between commercial hunting operations and subsistence hunting, especially for caribou. Our residents have consistently expressed a need for greater regulation of guides and transporters.

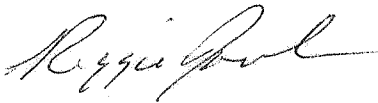
Under the current management system, there is no process to allocate the use of state lands by commercial hunting guides, and there are no limits on the number of authorizations that may be given for a specific area. As a result, some areas receive high commercial hunting pressure while other areas have little use. Providing authority for implementation of a guide concession program will go a long way to resolve user conflicts in the Borough.

While this bill will not solve all conflicts between commercial hunting operations and subsistence, it is an important first step. Because this bill does not include transporters and air taxis, user conflicts will continue because these operations are not adequately regulated and they significantly

contribute to hunting pressure in the Borough. I encourage the state to continue working with federal agencies to find a cooperative solution to management of this issue on state and federal lands.

In closing, I urge the Senate Resources Committee to pass to pass SB 160 out of committee. This bill has widespread support, and the management framework for a guide concession program developed by the Department of Natural Resources results from a comprehensive public involvement process.

Sincerely,



Reggie Joule
Mayor

cc: Honorable Fred Dyson, Vice-Chair, Senate Resources Committee
Honorable Peter Micciche, Member, Senate Resources Committee
Honorable Click Bishop, Member, Senate Resources Committee
Honorable Lesil McGuire, Member, Senate Resources Committee
Honorable Anna Fairclough, Member, Senate Resources Committee
Honorable Hollis French, Member, Senate Resources Committee
Honorable John Coghill, Alaska State Senate
Honorable Gary Stevens, Alaska State Senate
Honorable Donald Olson, Alaska State Senate
Joe Balash, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Natural Resources