

ALASKA STATE HOUSE

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REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Sponsor Statement for CS House Bill 137(FIN)

“An Act raising certain fees related to sport fishing, hunting, and trapping; relating to the fish and game fund; providing for the repeal of the sport fishing surcharge and sport fishing facility revenue bonds; replacing the permanent sport fishing, hunting, or trapping identification card for certain residents with an identification card valid for three years; relating to fish and game conservation decals; raising the age of eligibility for a sport fishing, hunting, or trapping license exemption for state residents; raising the age at which a state resident is required to obtain a license for sport fishing, hunting, or trapping; and providing for an effective date.”

House Bill 137 is a response to calls from individual hunters, fishers, outdoorsman groups, and the Department of Fish & Game (DF&G) to raise license and tag fees. There is currently a deficiency between the costs associated with management needs and the revenue brought in by license and tag fees. The primary change that HB 137 makes is raising resident, and nonresident, fishing, trapping, and combination licenses to help deal with this deficiency. However, the most significant change in fees occurs to *nonresident* big game tag fees.

HB 137 also limits eligibility for a low-income license only to *Alaskans* that have an annual income less than the most recent poverty guidelines for their household size. The bill also creates a voluntary fish and game conservation decal that a person who does not hunt or fish can purchase in order to contribute to the conservation efforts in Alaska. The current fishing surcharge will also be combined with each fishing license fee once the hatchery bonds are paid off, but will not increase the overall price of a fishing license in Alaska.

The final change to this bill is to raise the age of eligibility for the hunting, fishing, and trapping license exemption from 60 years to 62 years and requires that they renew this exemption every three years. Also, the age required for residents to obtain a license is raised from 16 to 18.

It has been over 17 years since many nonresident fees have been raised and over 24 years since most resident fish and game fees have been raised. HB 137 will help ensure that Alaskans can continue to enjoy use of Alaska’s abundant fish and game resources.