

March 26, 2015

Re: SB68

Madam Chair Giessel and members of the Senate Resources Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB68. I am a retired wildlife biologist having served 28 years with the Department of Fish and Game. The majority of that time was on the Kenai where I worked closely with the five local Advisory Committees (ACs). Following retirement, 2002, I was appointed to the Board of Game and am currently serving my fifth term, and I am the chairman. This experience allowed me to work with the 84 ACs across the state. I believe all but a couple ACs will support this bill.

The following statements are my personal comments and are not meant to represent the Board of Game, only my experience working with ACs and the Board process involving antlerless moose hunts.

For the 2015 hunting season, 18,351 individuals submitted 52,008 applications to the Department in hopes of winning a permit to harvest an antlerless moose. At five dollars per application fee, the Department collected 260,040 dollars to help pay for management of wildlife. This level of interest and revenue will continue to increase with implementation of active management programs focused on increasing moose numbers and hunter's opportunities to fill their freezers.

Passage of SB68 will benefit the Board process by saving time if we are not required to address antlerless hunts annually but the larger benefit will be realized by the 84 ACs and Department. Since antlerless hunts must be reauthorized annually, the Department is required to submit a proposal and provide recommendations for each hunt that goes out to ACs for comment, however, not all ACs are required to submit comments. The Board designed areas of jurisdiction, 5AAC 98.005, and established the requirement that a majority of ACs in the Game Management Unit or Subunit must approve an antlerless hunt before it can be addressed by the Board. I may have overlooked some but in my 40 years of experience, I can only recall one case where AC approval was not achieved and the Board was not allowed to address an antlerless moose hunt. This was during a recent Board meeting in Anchorage requesting an antlerless moose hunt in Kincaid Park, where only two of the three ACs having jurisdiction voted, with one in favor and one opposed.

SB68 will not remove an AC's authority to veto an antlerless moose hunt. It will, however, delay such action to the following year so individuals that applied for a permit do not lose their chance to be selected. The department does not return the application fee (\$5) but the larger loss is their hopes of winning a special permit. ACs generally hold their meetings during mid-winter or just following the new year, the deadline for submitting permit applications ends December 15. By delaying ACs veto action, the Department can withdraw the hunt before hunters submit applications. The number of applications received for several of these hunts exceeds 4,000.

I urge you to support SB68 and thank you for your service.

Best regards, Ted Spraker 262-9592 (Soldotna)