

# ALASKA

## PROFESSIONAL HUNTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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February 15, 2019

Dear Senator Wilson,

The Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) would like to thank you for sponsoring SB43 and lend our strong support to re-authorizing the Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB). APHA is Alaska's only organization advocating for Alaska's historic hunting guide industry. Founded in 1971, APHA has approximately 135 professional members, representing more than 40% of Alaska's guide businesses. As a professional organization we advocate for high ethical and professional standards within our industry. APHA recognizes that Alaska's big game resources we rely on are held in the public trust and our access to those resources is a privilege that comes with stewardship responsibilities. The BGCSB is the central public institution that keeps our profession vital and our relationship with the general public sustainable and healthy in an ever changing, complex world.

Alaska's guide industry is a net positive to the State coffers and contributes essential new dollars to the Alaskan economy, especially in rural Alaska. Alaska's active registered hunting guides are overwhelmingly Alaska residents (89%, McDowell 2014). Close to 50% of the total \$78 million total economic activity is captured in rural areas in Alaska. (McDowell 2014). These numbers and this relationship between Alaska ownership and Alaska's game resources are essential to keep in mind when considering re-authorizing the BGCSB. Without high licensing standards and the vocational/apprentice path to professional licensure that the BGCSB administers and oversees, this healthy economic relationship could be lost. We urge the legislature to keep in mind that the Division of Wildlife (ADF&G) is a huge beneficiary of hunting license and tag fees from our clients (non-residents) and that these revenue streams are matched by federal dollars 3 to 1. In total non-resident hunters account for 72% of the division of wildlife's budget while making up less than 13% of the hunters in the field. Alaska's hunting guide industry direct and indirect benefits to the State, economy and general public are significant.

Big game is a cornerstone of Alaskan culture. Game is a source of subsistence and food security; while providing immeasurable enjoyment when viewed. Alaskan wildlife is a major attraction for domestic and global travelers alike. Wildlife and Alaska are synonymous. Alaska's reputation and attractiveness as a global destination requires that we have world-class game management and responsible programs where commercial take of wildlife is allowed. Guiding hunters may be the oldest value-added tour in Alaska but it is essential that the industry and profession continually update its standards to maintain its place in the future. Without the delegated regulatory authority afforded the BGCSB it would be impossible for the industry to stay current and responsive to the general public and the industry's needs.

Guiding hunters in Alaska's vast wilderness requires a diverse and impressive set of skills. Wilderness travel, first aid, meat handling, charging bears, raging river and flying are the

*Dedicated to the conservation of our wildlife resources.*

associations that come to mind when one thinks about an “Alaskan hunting guide.” APHA is working hard to maintain these positive associations and we need our BGCSB to continue this process. APHA is a seasoned organization that has advocated for Alaska’s guide industry through many challenging and difficult times in Alaska’s history. We respectfully offer our strong support for the Big Game Commercial Services Board as an institution that is essential for the future of our industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sam Rohrer", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Sam Rohrer  
President, APHA