

HOUSE BILL NO. 414

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE KELLY

Introduced: 2/16/98

Referred: Resources

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to management of game and to the duties of the commissioner**
2 **of fish and game."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1. FINDINGS.** The legislature finds that

5 (1) the state has a duty to its citizens to manage its renewable natural
6 resources, such as game, to maintain the quantity of those resources so they remain available
7 for use by residents of the state;

8 (2) rural and nonrural residents of the state have expressed, in legislative
9 hearings and other public forums throughout the state, concerns about the decline of game
10 populations and the loss of the opportunity to successfully participate in hunting activities;

11 (3) the loss of opportunity to hunt successfully in hunting areas contributes to
12 increased friction and tension between user groups;

13 (4) an abundant supply of game is essential to continuance of the subsistence,
14 personal use, and general hunting lifestyle in the state;

1 (5) an abundant supply of game to provide food for human consumption is
 2 essential for residents to maintain their traditional reliance on wild food sources and is best
 3 achieved by active scientific management of game populations and habitats;

4 (6) chronically low populations of moose in Interior Alaska have placed
 5 economic stresses on residents of the region who have traditionally relied on moose as a major
 6 food source; some populations of moose in the Interior region of the state are reported to be
 7 only a fraction of the population levels that existed in the 1960s and early 1970s;

8 (7) moose populations in game management units 12, 19C, 19D, 20C, 20D,
 9 20E, 20F, 21, 24, 25, and 26 have been reduced to the extent that the welfare of residents of
 10 these units and the economic health of these areas have been adversely affected;

11 (8) at the time of statehood for Alaska, the Steese-Forty Mile caribou herd
 12 numbered over 60,000 animals and sustained a harvest of thousands of caribou each year; at
 13 the present time, the herd numbers about 22,000 animals and has a maximum human harvest
 14 allocation of 150 animals each year;

15 (9) the Steese-Forty Mile caribou herd is not able to provide for the needs of
 16 Alaska residents while the herd is present in Alaska and is rarely available for harvest by
 17 humans in the Canadian portion of its range;

18 (10) modern scientific management must be implemented to restore the
 19 biological health of the state's game resources.

20 * **Sec. 2.** AS 16.05.255 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

21 (h) The Board of Game shall establish population and harvest objectives and
 22 adopt other regulations to promote a high level of harvest by humans of big game prey
 23 populations.

24 * **Sec. 3.** AS 16.05.270 is amended to read:

25 **Sec. 16.05.270. Delegation of authority to commissioner.** (a) For the
 26 purpose of administering AS 16.05.251 and 16.05.255, each board may delegate
 27 authority to the commissioner to act on [IN] its behalf.

28 **(b) If a board delegates authority to the commissioner to act on its behalf,**
 29 **the commissioner shall cooperate with and assist the board by implementing**
 30 **regulations, management plans, and other management programs as requested by**
 31 **the board.**

1 (c) If there is a conflict between the board and the commissioner on proposed
2 regulations, public hearings shall be held concerning the issues in question. If, after
3 the public hearings, the board and the commissioner continue to disagree, the issue
4 shall be certified in writing by the board and the commissioner to the governor, who
5 shall make a decision. The decision of the governor is final.

6 * **Sec. 4.** AS 16.05 is amended by adding a new section to article 7 to read:

7 **Sec. 16.05.911. Preferences among beneficial uses of game.** The highest and
8 best use of game is personal and family use for human consumption. The other
9 beneficial uses of game, in order of preference, include

10 (1) commercial use, including trapping and guiding; and

11 (2) nonconsumptive use, for commercial and noncommercial purposes.