

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 25, 2008
1:53 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Carl Gatto, Co-Chair
Representative Craig Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Anna Fairclough
Representative Bob Roses
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative David Guttenberg

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Alaska Board of Game

Craig Fleener - Fort Yukon
Lewis Bradley - Palmer

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

EXECUTIVE ORDER 114 - TRANSFER HABITAT DIV FROM DNR TO F&G

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to report

WITNESS REGISTER

CRAIG FLEENER, Appointee
to the Board of Game
Fort Yukon, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Board of Game.

LEWIS BRADLEY, Appointee
to the Board of Game
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Board of Game.

TOM BANKS, Executive Director
Defenders of Wildlife
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed Mr. Lewis Bradley's appointment to the Board of Game.

JOHN TOPPENBERG, Executive Director
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed Mr. Lewis Bradley's appointment to the Board of Game and, for now, supported Mr. Craig Fleener's appointment to the Board of Game.

WADE WILLIS
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed Mr. Lewis Bradley's appointment to the Board of Game and supported Mr. Craig Fleener's appointment to the Board of Game.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CO-CHAIR CRAIG JOHNSON called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at [1:5301 PM](#). Representatives Edgmon, Kawasaki, Fairclough, Wilson, Seaton, Roses, Gatto, and Johnson were present at the call to order.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)
Board of Game

[1:53:18 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON announced that the committee would consider the appointments of Mr. Craig Fleener and Mr. Lewis Bradley to the Board of Game [Packets contained biographical information on the appointees.]

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON asked Mr. Fleener to state why he is interested in being on the Board of Game.

CRAIG FLEENER, Appointee to the Board of Game, stated he has been interested in leadership positions, regardless of the issue, throughout his life. To have the best impact a person needs to be in a position where a big difference can be made, he said. He does not like just talking about problems; he likes the idea of working on problems and working with other people to solve those problems. So, when he was presented with this opportunity he thought it would be a great way to put into practice what has been important to him for a long time and to share some of his ideas about wildlife management.

[1:55:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked for Mr. Fleener's opinion on the cow and calf moose hunts in Game Management Units 20A and 20B.

MR. FLEENER responded he could not give a definitive answer as to whether he is for or against it because he has not looked at the issue in detail, but he knows from talking to biologists and other people that it is definitely a debated issue. If the population is high enough to sustain a cow hunt, then he would support it; but if the population could not support it, then sound principles of wildlife management would dictate there not be a cow hunt. He said he would have to see all of the information in detail to give a better answer. However, if any population can sustain harvest, then there is no reason to not allow harvest.

[1:56:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested a synopsis of Mr. Fleener's duties when he served on the Eastern Interior Subsistence Federal Regional Advisory Committee.

MR. FLEENER said he served on that committee for about 10 years. When he was made chairman he took the opportunity to reorganize how the committee functioned. He did not like how the committee rushed through debate and sometimes did not allow certain people to give their opinion. He thought there needed to be broad and fair debate on all of the issues to ensure the committee made the best decisions possible. Therefore, he reorganized how the committee ran things so that all of the staff that was scheduled to speak spoke in the same order each time, which allowed them to plan their presentations accordingly. Then community members were given the opportunity to speak because their opinions were important as well. The committee dealt with many controversial issues about which the House Resources Standing Committee is

probably aware. He said he enjoyed being chairman, but resigned in protest because he felt the federal system was not really meeting the needs of the committee's people. He said he is now unsure whether that was a good decision because stepping down from a position of authority results in losing a say in matters. A lot of tweaking is needed to make the federal advisory system better, he added.

[1:59:16 PM](#)

MR. FLEENER, in response to Co-Chair Gatto, said he is a tribal member of the Gwich'in Council. [He served four years on the Gwich'in Council International.]

CO-CHAIR GATTO inquired about the Gwich'in Council's position on subsistence as well as Mr. Fleener's position on subsistence.

MR. FLEENER replied he cannot speak on behalf of the Tribal Council in Fort Yukon. However, subsistence is vitally important and wildlife, fisheries, and waterfowl must be managed in a way that produces enough animals to meet subsistence needs. The tribe supports any management regime that allows members to meet the subsistence needs of their families, he said.

[2:00:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GATTO asked if Mr. Fleener's personal position is that subsistence users are defined by the area they live in, or by the background that they come from, or by some other attribute.

MR. FLEENER said subsistence can be looked at from a number of perspectives. From the federal perspective all rural residents have the right to subsist. Under state law every resident of the state has the right to subsist, and this is based not on a person's region but on being an Alaska resident. As a tribal member in addition to that, he supports the ability of tribal members to subsist. Although subsistence can be a very controversial issue, he has been able to bridge the gaps between a number of the arguments. While in the federal system he brought his perspective as a tribal member and learned a lot and worked with non-tribal folks to ensure that their subsistence needs were also met. The Board of Game is a state board and he will abide by state laws when making decisions, he said, but this controversial issue can be answered in a number of ways.

[2:02:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GATTO inquired whether Mr. Fleener believes there should be a rural preference over game.

MR. FLEENER allowed he has had a problem with rural preference for quite a while because he supports some components and has a problem with others. He said the rural subsistence preference has created a lot of debate and argument instead of allowing people to work together to solve problems and get to providing more meat for the table.

2:03:28 PM

CO-CHAIR GATTO asked whether the zip code in which someone lives should be considered as far as subsistence is concerned.

MR. FLEENER answered that from a state perspective it cannot. Fair consideration must be given to all residents in Alaska.

CO-CHAIR GATTO asked what Mr. Fleener's consideration is.

MR. FLEENER replied everyone in Alaska has a right to the resources.

2:04:10 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH noted that 90 percent of Alaska's revenue comes from the oil industry and there is quite a bit of money from the federal level. No other economy in Alaska is as vibrant as the oil industry in terms of percentage of the state budget. She asked whether Mr. Fleener believes Alaska is a resource state and that is how the state will continue to thrive, or does he see the state as something else.

MR. FLEENER responded it would be impossible to argue with the fact that the majority of Alaska's revenue is extracted from the earth and that this is vitally important to the existence of Alaska and funding state government. Right now the Yukon Flats area is pretty much a no-industry area, he said, and ways to get more revenue to the area are being looked at.

2:06:30 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked for Mr. Fleener's position in regard to listing the polar bear as an endangered species.

MR. FLEENER replied he is not a polar bear expert, but he thinks every species in the state should be looked at from time to time

to see how they are doing as a population and as subpopulations and to determine whether or not to make such drastic decisions. He said that as far as he knows the polar bear population in Alaska is stable and he would be cautious in listing a stable population. Although wildlife populations should be managed cautiously, he does not recommend listing a species as endangered based on the idea that the population might be declining. He did not know if polar bears have the ability to adapt to the changes that are coming. There have been some big changes in the Yukon Flats, he noted. Climate impacts have changed weather patterns, wildlife patterns, and fire patterns. Each broad group of animals needs to be looked at individually, he said.

[2:08:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH commented that extinction and life cycles are part of normal evolution. She asked Mr. Fleener if he would, as a Board of Game member, jeopardize Alaska's entire revenue stream by labeling a species that he knows would tie Alaska's hands in accessing those resources.

MR. FLEENER said he would hate to be labeled as the guy who tied Alaska's hands, but as a Board of Game member he would absolutely have to look at how to protect a species that is in decline. The goal of his position is to provide hunting opportunities, so his number one priority on this board must be to ensure that populations are safe and stable. He said he does not want to do something that would jeopardize Alaska's government or residents, but as a Board of Game member he must make recommendations that would prevent the decline of a population, stabilize it, and, if possible, increase the population.

[2:11:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH noted there are natural ebbs and flows of wildlife populations, and that it concerns her when only the upward movement of populations is considered. She inquired how Mr. Fleener would balance wildlife when it intersects with providing the means for Alaska's residents.

MR. FLEENER responded he has grappled with that issue for quite a few years and wildlife populations do fluctuate. Hunted populations must be monitored much more closely than non-hunted populations because the human impact is much greater on the hunted populations, especially if those hunted populations

fluctuate a lot. Wildlife management is primarily managing people, he said. If it is an unharvested population there is not much management and nature is allowed to take its course. Snowshoe hare is one such example - it has big ups and downs that are regulated a lot by the lynx population which in return is regulated by the snowshoe hare population. Nature takes care of itself in a lot of ways and sometimes humans just get in the way. If humans drive a population down because of overharvest, then there must be more active management to ensure the population recovers, such as reducing access or bag limits and sometimes stopping hunting altogether until the population recovers.

[2:14:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked Mr. Fleener to speak to populations that are located in other countries and are on the increase, such as polar bear, but are being affected by climate change rather than hunting.

MR. FLEENER said he does not know how polar bear populations are doing in other countries. As far as he is aware, polar bear hunting is still allowed in Canada which he assumes means that the population there is stable.

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH clarified that she is only using the polar bear as an example, but it could be any species. In regard to managing just Alaska's region, does a population have to be on the decline, or is there consideration that a population may be moving because of climate conditions, she asked.

MR. FLEENER replied that for adjacent populations like in Alaska and Canada, it would be wise to consider the entire range for that population. Management should not be stopped just because of a border, but unfortunately that happens. However, there are good mechanisms in place for working with Canada, he said, such as the Forty-Mile Caribou Herd and salmon issues.

[2:16:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI inquired whether Mr. Fleener would go along with a recommendation by the local advisory committee to stop the cow and calf moose hunts in Game Management Unit 20, and what would be the process and procedure for making a decision.

MR. FLEENER answered he would have to look at the carrying capacity of the habitat, the predator populations, the human harvest of the resource, the moose population itself in comparison with historic numbers, and the health of cows such as rump fat thickness and twinning rates. He said he would take the committee's recommendation into consideration because that is the purpose, but he would first take a look at the biology and then consider the management regime that is set in place in order to make a decision.

[2:17:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked whether Mr. Fleener's opinions would be based on the scientific approach to management.

MR. FLEENER said he would use his science background, his upbringing, and the consideration of people's needs. Sometimes a decision cannot be made solely on science, especially for controversial issues like cow or doe hunting.

[2:18:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI requested Mr. Fleener to comment on aerial wolf hunting.

MR. FLEENER responded that if wolf populations can sustain hunting, he thinks people should be allowed to hunt them in a lot of different ways. Provided a population can withstand harvest, he said he does not like the idea of controlling methods and means too much.

[2:19:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked whether Mr. Fleener would prefer the state or regular hunters to do aerial wolf hunting.

MR. FLEENER replied that in regard to predator management as a means of reducing wolf populations for the sake of the prey population, no tool should be taken out of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's tool bag. There should be equal consideration for any good idea that will take care of the problem in the quickest, safest, and most cost effective way, he said. However, what people think must also be considered.

[2:20:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI requested Mr. Fleener's opinion on wolf denning.

MR. FLEENER said his opinion is based on growing up in Fort Yukon where denning is talked about a lot, along with how important it is to keep wolf populations in control. It is an effective and valuable tool to control wolf populations, he said. Since he is unaware of the specific issues in regard to the state or what the Board of Game has discussed, he would have to take that into consideration.

[2:22:19 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI inquired about wood bison and their sustainability in the Yukon Flats.

MR. FLEENER noted he has supported the reintroduction of wood bison into Alaska since 1991 or 1992. Wood bison were indigenous to Alaska up until about 100 years ago and currently only exist in Canada, he explained. They are not the introduced plains bison that are presently in the state. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game is in the process of bringing wood bison across the border. He said he supports this because, in the Yukon Flats especially, it brings a large grass-grazing herbivore which the state does not currently have. Alaska only has small grazers like mice. It would help the ecosystem and would provide tourism activities as well. The benefits would include reorganizing the habitat as it exists right now, such as creating wallows which are habitat for waterfowl and other species. The Yukon Flats has either the lowest or second lowest moose population in Alaska, he related, so wood bison would supplement the people's food sources.

[2:24:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked for Mr. Fleener's opinion of Executive Order 114 which would move the Division of Habitat back into the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

MR. FLEENER responded he does not know if he has an opinion. He said he was surprised when the division was initially pulled out, but has not thought enough about it to give a good answer.

[2:24:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI inquired whether Mr. Fleener thinks the Board of Game is currently a diverse board and what will he do to enhance that.

MR. FLEENER said he was excited after getting the phone call asking if he would like to be on the Board of Game, so he started looking online at newspaper articles and saw the concern that having only him does not make the board diverse enough. However, since he does not know the members of the board personally, his opinion regarding the board's diversity may be premature. Diversity is a good thing and more diversity is better than less, he said. A good cross section of the Alaska community is needed, including those people who depend on the resource, people with commercial backgrounds, people who solely subsist on the resource, and sport hunters.

[2:26:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked whether Mr. Fleener thinks non-hunters should be on the Board of Game.

MR. FLEENER replied that it is the Board of Game, and the term game refers to animals that are specifically hunted, they are there to be consumed. He said he is not opposed to having a non-hunter on the board, but it may not be in the best interest of what the board is designed to do and could present problems. He likes the idea that the resources are being managed because people are hunting them and that needs to have a priority consideration, he said. However, he would not have a problem at least considering other folks and looking at it in more detail.

[2:28:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI inquired whether Mr. Fleener considers wildlife viewing a use.

MR. FLEENER said it is not a consumptive use. Whether wildlife is managed or not, a picture can always be taken. He said it is a past-time, so it cannot really be considered a use.

[2:29:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked whether Mr. Fleener has ever been a paying member of the Alaska Outdoor Counsel.

MR. FLEENER answered no.

[2:29:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GATTO inquired how Mr. Fleener would respond if a nonconsumptive user testified to the Board of Game that hunters have taken away his or her opportunity to see moose.

MR. FLEENER agreed that the moose in his freezer would not be very photogenic. However, he said, Alaska's wildlife populations are some of the best managed in the country and there are plenty of photo opportunities throughout the state. The majority of Alaska's lands are federal lands where there is limited hunting and lots of opportunities for taking pictures. There are places for photo opportunities where hunting is restricted and this opportunity will continue.

[2:31:50 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GATTO referred to Mr. Fleener's statement that a decision should not be based solely on science, and asked whether Mr. Fleener would not want to hear someone's opinions if they were not science based.

MR. FLEENER said science and the answers from science are always changing. A good example of this is the periodic adjustments to salmon escapement goals because of new and changing information. Science often gives a hard number and there may be a variety of reasons for why adjustments are necessary - social reasons being one big issue. Therefore, he would never say he does not want to hear someone's opinion.

[2:33:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON complimented Mr. Fleener on his impressive and varied background. He asked whether Mr. Fleener's name was originally submitted to the Board of Game prior to 2/8/08.

MR. FLEENER stated he did not know the date that his name was originally submitted. He said he received calls from about 12 people around the state telling him that they were submitting his name, so he thinks he was considered in the original go around. However, he was out in the Yukon Flats during that time period and could not be found and a person's name cannot be forwarded without first being contacted.

[2:34:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON inquired whether Mr. Fleener can devote the large amount of time that is required for being on the board.

MR. FLEENER said he has been on lots of boards and committees and, yes, it will put a lot on him. However, he has adjusted his life around serving on different boards and committees in order to have an impact on things. At one time he was on 17 different boards and committees, but he is no longer on that many. He said he knows it will be a major part of his life, but thinks it is important.

[2:36:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked Mr. Fleener's opinion on HB 256 regarding active game management.

MR. FLEENER responded he has not looked at it.

[2:37:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON asked Mr. Fleener's opinion regarding the Yukon Flats land swap.

MR. FLEENER said this is a huge, controversial issue and folks in the Yukon Flats are very concerned about maintaining wildlife populations and a clean, healthy environment and ecosystem because subsistence is important. He said he is one of the few who supports oil and gas development because the Yukon Flats is one of the lowest income-generating parts of the state with upwards of 80 percent unemployment and, therefore, financial opportunities are needed. The development proposed by Doyon, Limited ("Doyon") would occur in the southern-most part of the refuge right next to the White Mountains, he related. Historically, that is one area in the Yukon Flats where there is the lowest amount of subsistence. However, that does not mean it is unimportant. People in the Yukon Flats say it is still a vitally important place because wildlife populations move around. There does not seem like much hope for generating revenue in the Yukon Flats region other than this, he said. While it may be short-term revenue of about 30 years, wise management of the money can make it last long into the future. If done smartly, it will not destroy the environment. Alaska has some of the best standards in the nation when it comes to oil and gas development. Additionally, Doyon has a responsibility to its shareholders to not destroy the ecosystem.

2:40:32 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked whether Mr. Fleener is a member of any preservation or conservation groups.

MR. FLEENER replied he is not a member of anything other than being a Cub Scout a long time ago.

2:41:01 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH inquired whether the polar bear is predator or prey.

MR. FLEENER noted it is preyed on by people but it preys on other things, so the polar bear is both.

2:41:18 PM

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES said he is impressed with Mr. Fleener's background and enthusiastically supports his appointment to the Board of Game, especially after hearing Mr. Fleener's testimony today.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON complimented Mr. Fleener on his thoughtful answers to all the questions.

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON echoed Representative Roses' comments and thanked Mr. Fleener for his military service and his service to the state.

2:42:51 PM

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON asked the second Board of Game nominee, Mr. Lewis Bradley, to state why he is interested in being on the Board of Game.

LEWIS BRADLEY, Appointee to the Board of Game, said he is retired and has hunted and fished for 35 years in Alaska and wants to play as big a part as possible in ensuring that the resource is available for his grandkids and other future Alaskans. In further response to Co-Chair Johnson, Mr. Bradley said he does not have a wildlife background like Mr. Fleener, but he has practical experience.

2:44:14 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH requested Mr. Bradley to address her previous questions regarding the polar bear and resource development.

MR. BRADLEY responded that what a person reads and what is actually happening can be different so he is not sure and that is one reason why he wants to be on the board. He noted that he is writing a book and has been unable to get some of the information he sought, and hopefully he can get better information by being on the board. As far as the polar bear is concerned, all animals are important, he said. Global warming cannot be stopped if it is a natural process. He is concerned about the polar bear and does not want the species to become extinct but, on the other hand, humans are part of the equation and being able to live is important also. He said that with today's technology people should be able to help the polar bear and still be able to extract resources in a responsible manner so that everybody wins.

[2:46:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH inquired whether Mr. Bradley supports listing the polar bear as endangered.

MR. BRADLEY replied that, based on what he knows now, he would have to say no. He said he is aware that the polar bear is being hunted in Canada and maybe other places and he would have to hear hard numbers. When listing a species as endangered, there must also be consideration about what that will do as far as tying up development and other things.

[2:46:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked whether Mr. Bradley is a member of any groups.

MR. BRADLEY answered no.

[2:47:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES inquired whether Mr. Bradley brought his own name forward or was he contacted by someone else.

MR. BRADLEY said he was contacted by Mr. Bailey and told that his name had been mentioned. When asked by Mr. Bailey if he was interested, he said yes. He then sent in his résumé and subsequently received an interview. In further response to

Representative Roses, Mr. Bradley said he taught physical education and coached mostly boys' sports, and that it was Gerry Yates who was Governor Palin's basketball coach.

[2:48:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KAWASAKI asked Mr. Bradley to state the qualifications he will bring to the Board of Game.

MR. BRADLEY responded he has a lot of experience in the field and he reads and has a lot of thought for the game that he wants to be here in the future. He said he is willing to put forth the effort that it takes to become knowledgeable as far as the biology of fish and game. He is currently writing a book and conducting quite a bit of in-depth study on sheep, so he knows the procedures that are undertaken. Between hunting and collecting horns and antlers for carving he spends two to three months a year out in the field. He said he knows the animal population is not what it used to be in most cases and it is no longer an unlimited supply, and he is concerned about that. While he does not have a wildlife management background, he would provide diversity because having all wildlife managers on the board may not necessarily be a good thing. He would be honest and try to decide what would be the best. He said he thinks both people and game should be considered so that the game will be there in the future, and that management should also be for abundance. He has a science minor from college and has a strong interest and can serve in the capacity.

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH acknowledged that every person brings different things at different levels to the table and said she appreciates Mr. Bradley's willingness to serve the state in this way.

[2:52:05 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON opened public testimony.

TOM BANKS, Executive Director, Defenders of Wildlife, related that he spoke at length with Mr. Bradley and found him to be congenial with a good résumé as a teacher, but severely under qualified to serve on the Board of Game. Although Mr. Bradley is a sheep hunter, his testimony today indicates he is not up to speed on the important wildlife issues before the board, said Mr. Banks. Defenders of Wildlife is made up of hunters and nonhunters and its members are proponents of rational wildlife management for the benefit of the ecosystem and all Alaska

citizens and is therefore not coming at this with a predisposition. Mr. Banks said he could not support Mr. Bradley's nomination because there are other people with the necessary experience who are willing to serve. He cited AS 16.05.221 which states that the Board of Game members shall be appointed "on the basis of interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, ability in the field of action of the board, and with a view to providing diversity of interest and points of view in the membership."

[2:54:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES inquired whether the Defenders of Wildlife's position is that board members must have a wildlife background and there is no room for a lay person.

MR. BANKS accepted Representative Roses' point, but said that in this instance Mr. Bradley's nomination does not add any diversity to the Board of Game because all the other members are also consumers of the resource.

[2:55:58 PM](#)

JOHN TOPPENBERG, Executive Director, Alaska Wildlife Alliance, said he participated in Mr. Bradley's conversation with Mr. Banks and found Mr. Bradley to be a very nice man who is knowledgeable in the specific realm of Dall sheep hunting. However, from the perspective of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, that is hardly an adequate qualification to serve on this board. The state constitution mandates that the Board of Game represent all Alaskans and if Mr. Bradley had another area of specialization, such as tourism or wildlife photography, perhaps his nomination could be viewed differently. When asked during the conversation about issues that have been in the media, Mr. Bradley was totally nonconversant, said Mr. Toppenberg. Alaska can come up with far better qualified candidates.

[2:58:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked whether the Alaska Wildlife Alliance conducted the same type of interview with Mr. Fleener.

MR. TOPPENBERG responded no, Mr. Fleener's background and résumé were adequate for the Alaska Wildlife Alliance's purposes. He said that, for now, his organization supports Mr. Fleener's nomination.

2:59:26 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH inquired whether the Alaska Wildlife Alliance will be issuing a statement of support of Mr. Fleener's nomination.

MR. TOPPENBERG replied he would not go that far, but that at this point in time his organization is not going to oppose Mr. Fleener's nomination. That may change at a later date, he added.

3:00:03 PM

CO-CHAIR GATTO asked whether there is anyone else on the Board of Game who has spent 3 months of every year out in the field for over 30 years.

MR. TOPPENBERG said he is not sure that in this context that amounts to that great of a qualification, and he is unaware of any other member. To the best of his knowledge, the other people on the board are members of the Alaska Outdoor Council and Mr. Bradley is not, so maybe that is a type of diversity, Mr. Toppenberg allowed. However, Mr. Bradley certainly does not represent anything vaguely similar to the interests of nonconsumptive users which is something the Alaska Wildlife Alliance would be interested in.

3:01:19 PM

WADE WILLIS stated he is representing himself and that he is an avid moose hunter and subsistence fisherman, and that he makes a living wildlife watching through a tourism-based business for sea kayaking, rafting, and hiking. He said he strongly supports Mr. Fleener's nomination, but cannot support Mr. Bradley's nomination due to his not being qualified. Mr. Willis said he is also worried because Mr. Bradley did not actively seek the position, nor does it appear that Mr. Bradley has ever participated in the Board of Game process by testifying or attending a meeting. Mr. Bradley is a wonderful man and a great advocate for hunting but he is not yet there, said Mr. Willis. The Board of Game is mandated to represent all Alaskans, thus it is mandated to represent nonconsumptive users. Diversity is needed on the board to address user group conflicts which is a common problem in Alaska, and user group conflicts cannot be addressed by stacking the board with members that represent 15 percent of the state's residents. Mr. Bradley does not add to

the diversity of the Board of Game and does not have the background qualifications needed for such an important position.

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON closed public testimony.

[3:05:29 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR GATTO moved that the House Resources Standing Committee forward the names of Mr. Craig Fleener and Mr. Lewis Bradley to fulfill positions on the Board of Game membership to a joint session for consideration. There being no objections, the names of Mr. Fleener and Mr. Bradley were advanced.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [3:06:20 PM](#).