

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 17, 2008

3:37 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Charlie Huggins, Chair  
Senator Lyda Green  
Senator Lesil McGuire  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Senator Thomas Wagoner

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Bert Stedman, Vice Chair

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 214

"An Act relating to big game hunting by nonresident members of the military service and their dependents; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED CSSB 214(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

Confirmation Hearings

Board of Game

Ted. H. Spraker - Soldotna  
Lewis E. Bradley  
Craig L. Fleener

CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

Board of Fisheries

William S. Brown  
John E. Jensen  
Melvin E. Morris

POSTPONED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 214

SHORT TITLE: HUNTING BY MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) HUGGINS

01/16/08 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/4/08  
01/16/08 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

01/16/08 (S) RES  
02/27/08 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
02/27/08 (S) Heard & Held  
02/27/08 (S) MINUTE(RES)  
03/10/08 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
03/10/08 (S) Heard & Held  
03/10/08 (S) MINUTE(RES)  
03/17/08 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JODY SIMPSON

Staff to Senator Huggins  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Explained CSSB 214 (RES) version E for the sponsor.

KRISTIN WRIGHT, Supervisor

Finance Licensing  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)  
Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions regarding CSSB 214 (RES).

KEVIN SAXBY

Department of Law (DOL)  
Anchorage, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions on CSSB 214(RES).

FRANK BISHOP, representing himself

Kodiak, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Opposed SB 214.

BOBBY FITHIAN

Professional Hunters Association  
Anchorage, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported CSSB 214(RES), version E.

BRUCE KNOWLES, representing himself

Wasilla, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported CSSB 214(RES).

TOM LOGAN, representing himself

Big Lake, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported CSSB 214(RES).

TED H. SPRAKER

Soldotna, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Reappointee to the Board of Game.

LEWIS E. BRADLEY

Palmer, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Nominee for the Board of Game

CRAIG L. FLEENER

Anchorage, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Nominee for the Board of Game.

WADE WILLIS, representing himself

No address provided

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported Mr. Fleener and opposed Mr. Bradley.

BRUCE KNOWLES, Chair

Susitna River Fish and Game Advisory Committee

Willow, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Had not been notified of meeting.

PAUL SHADURA

Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee

Kenai, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported Mr. Spraker.

STEVE RUNYAN, representing self

Wasilla, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported Mr. Bradley, Mr. Fleener and Mr. Spraker.

RICKY GEASE, representing himself

Kenai, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported Mr. Spraker, Mr. Fleener and Mr. Bradley.

GARY HOLLIER, representing himself

Soldotna, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported Mr. Spraker for reconfirmation.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

**CHAIR CHARLIE HUGGINS** called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:37:37 PM](#). Present at the call to order were Senators Green, Stevens, Wielechowski, Wagoner and Huggins.

**SB 214-HUNTING BY MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY'**

[3:38:16 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGGINS announced SB 214 to be up for consideration.

JODY SIMPSON, staff to Senator Huggins, sponsor of SB 214, said there was a new CS, version E that she hoped accomplished the goals of the sponsor. It provides for military and Coast Guard members and their dependents, it waives the 12-month waiting period that is required currently in statute for them to be able to pay resident rates, it accords resident rate fees for permits and tags and it addresses Senator McGuire's concerns about going back to the original language of the bill. This CS does that and does it without qualifying them under other areas of the statute as residents. They are still defined as non-residents.

It also addresses Senator Wagoner's concerns in that it doesn't open up the dip-netting and personal use fisheries for these folks until they have been here for a year. An email from Kevin Saxby, Department of Law (DOL), confirms that. She said it also addresses the concerns of the Alaska Professional Hunters' Association and others by retaining the guide component for the three most dangerous species.

[3:40:11 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS said he appreciated all the work that went into this issue and he asked if this would include the uniform military and the Corps of Engineers.

CHAIR HUGGINS answered yes as they are a branch of the U.S. Army.

SENATOR STEVENS said he was thinking of the uniform medical corps in the BIA.

CHAIR HUGGINS said they are not covered by this bill.

[3:41:28 PM](#)

KRISTIN WRIGHT, Supervisor, Finance Licensing, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), relative to Senator Stevens' question, explained that the BIA and other groups, if they are not considered as part of the military on a certain federal register, they are not considered military.

SENATOR STEVENS said his concern is that the Coast Guard is under the Department of Homeland Security and it's their intention to cover them.

CHAIR HUGGINS said they are covered specifically in the bill. He asked if Ms. Wright saw any challenges in administering this change.

MS. WRIGHT answered no.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if someone from ADF&G could comment on whether this legislation would impact the numbers of fish and wildlife available to residents.

MS. WRIGHT answered they already pay the resident rate for the fishing license now, but at issue is the hunting license. Very few have participated in hunting, but it's possible that more military might hunt under this bill because the licenses would cost less than what they would have been paying. The fiscal note would always be a guess.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he supports the bill, but they have a constitutional obligation to mandate for sustainable resource and that's what he's getting at. He asked if she anticipated that these provisions would have a significant impact on that mandate.

MS. WRIGHT replied that these people would still be considered non-residents and wouldn't be able to participate in the personal use fisheries until they have met the one-year residency requirement. They are already doing that.

[3:44:42 PM](#)

KEVIN SAXBY, Department of Law (DOL), said he was available to answer questions.

SENATOR MCGUIRE joined the committee.

[3:45:24 PM](#)

FRANK BISHOP, combat veteran, Kodiak, said he had been a resident of Alaska for the past 37 years and he disagreed with SB 214. He thought they were trying to make a special status of citizen. At the present time all the military are voluntary and this would have a drastic impact on the economy of the local population that makes their living from non-residents.

CHAIR HUGGINS said requiring a guide for the big species in the first year would continue, so you still need a guide for brown bear and goat hunting. The other part is that the difference in some of the professions and vocations is that military people

are sent here on orders; it may be they want to come or they don't want to come, but they don't have a choice. A lot of young men and women are coming to Alaska for a matter of months and then shipping out to Iraq or Afghanistan, and some of them don't come back. He characterized it as being good hosts for young people who are really making a sacrifice for the country potentially. He concluded by thanking him for his years of service in being a combat veteran.

[3:49:01 PM](#)

BOBBY FITHIAN, Professional Hunters Association, supported SB 214, version E. He said they appreciated the sponsor working with them to delete sections 2 and 3 that dealt with the guide-required species.

[3:49:54 PM](#)

BRUCE KNOWLES, representing himself, Mat-Su, said he is a disable veteran and he loved this bill. He said that people who don't understand the military and those who have been away from it for years cannot understand today's military and the sacrifices these people are making. He has a son in the military and he said, "These people deserve everything we can give them." The fact that they won't be able to participate in the personal use fisheries is short sighted, but that's how it worked out.

[3:50:51 PM](#)

TOM LOGAN, representing himself, Big Lake, supported SB 214. He related that he had personal experience with this issue. He was transferred by the military to Alaska quite a few years ago, and the second day he was here he bought a non-resident hunting license and didn't sign in to his base for 10 days. The next year he used his non-resident hunting license to show that he had been in Alaska over a year, although it was a year and two days, and bought a regular hunting license. ADF&G tried to say "no" because the military said he didn't get here until 10 days later. The department didn't want to accept his old license as proof that he had been in Alaska 10 days before.

MR. LOGAN said a lot of other young men did the same thing; they came up early and hunted on a non-resident license and then wound up paying a fine because they couldn't document they had been here ahead of time.

[3:53:19 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to adopt CSSB 214(RES), version E, for discussion purposes. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

[3:54:20 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to report CSSB 214(RES), version E, from committee with individual recommendations and zero fiscal notes. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

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Board of Game Confirmation Hearings

CHAIR HUGGINS said the committee next would hear from the Governor's nominees to the Board of Game.

[4:02:26 PM](#)

TED H. SPRAKER, nominee for the Board of Game, said he is a current member of the Board of Game and also serves on the Big Game Commercial Services Board. He lives in Soldotna with his wife and family. He was raised in Wyoming where he went to the University of Wyoming. He completed his bachelor's degree in wildlife management in 1971 and completed a master's degree in range management in 1973. He moved to Alaska in July 1973 and is a 35-year resident and he is 59 years of age. He worked as a wildlife biologist for ADF&G for 28 years and 4 months; he retired in June 2002. In January 2003 he was appointed to the Board of Game and was just recently reappointed to his third term. He has also served as the vice chair of the Board of Game for the last couple of years and holds the Board of Game's seat on the Big Game Commercial Services Board on which he has served since it was established three years ago. The reason he wants to remain on the board is that wildlife management and working with the public has been his life long career and he likes it.

CHAIR HUGGINS asked him to highlight a couple of contributions he has made while on the board.

MR. SPRAKER answered said that one of his contributions that he used his long career working for ADF&G to listen very carefully to the scientific data that was presented. He was told long ago, "As long as you look after the resource and do the best you can as far as maintaining healthy populations and healthy habitat that you are always going to make the right decisions." He also tries to mix his scientific background with where the public comes into the equation. The board works as a team and he tries his best to represent all users across the state.

CHAIR HUGGINS asked what challenges he saw in the next 24 months.

[4:08:19 PM](#)

MR. SPRAKER answered that every year they are challenged by the subsistence mandate. The board has struggled with the Nelchina caribou hunt issues in Unit 13. The Ahtna Corporation has not been pleased with some of the board's subsistence outcomes, even though they have a good record on this issue across the state. Another big issue is their desire to manage predators across the state. He said they have a very clear mandate to increase populations in certain areas especially populations that are depleted where subsistence needs have not been met.

MR. SPRAKER said the residents of this state really deserve a well-thought out and long term program as far as managing predators goes and he thought they had that. Recently the prey population has responded well in McGrath due to reducing wolves and bears in that area.

[4:11:14 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGGINS said at a recent statewide organizational meeting the department had presentations on intensive management and he asked if intensive management had been a discussion point on the board - although he thought probably not. He then jumped to habitat and asked if there are any success stories or conversations or debates he had been involved in that revolved around the adequacy or the need to improve habitat, particularly as it might apply to moose.

MR. SPRAKER answered there have been a lot of successful programs across the state with habitat, but unfortunately they are always associated with wild fires, because moose habitat requires a large amount of land. For that reason it's financially difficult to enhance habitat over large areas. However, a good example of increased moose numbers would be in the Interior around and east of Fairbanks. The department has responded to this increase by allowing harvesting of antlerless moose in some areas.

[4:14:22 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if things other than predators are impacting big game ungulates like big game hunters.

MR. SPRAKER answered it's rare that only one thing impacts prey. Basically three things kill moose - weather, predators and high velocity lead, and the board can help balance things through its allocation efforts. There is an issue with sheep declining

across the state, but they are pretty sure it's not because of hunters.

CHAIR HUGGINS asked if there were any conflicts he might have in his position on the board that they should know about.

MR. SPRAKER replied the only opposition to his reappointment came from the Ahtna Corporation. He also had opposition because of his stand on statewide users and that he was in favor of a salary cap on subsistence hunters in Unit 13; he also voted in opposition to a proposal that would have eliminated all the Fairbanks tier 2 hunters in Unit 13 when the number of permits was 2,000. He felt that was unfair to users across the state and that the salary income was something that was needed to better characterize a subsistence user and meet the criteria they are mandated to look at. Those two issues were in a letter in opposition to his reappointment.

MR. SPRAKER said he had also been criticized from a couple of groups who are strongly opposed to management of wolves, although he didn't know if they had written any letters.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he received a couple of letters from constituents about wolverine trapping east of Anchorage in Chugach State Park. He asked him if he was going to relook into the situation that had trapped about 12 wolverines and 6 dogs. Some of the traps were right off of trails.

MR. SPRAKER replied that at the last board meeting they took a very careful look at that and he offered an amendment that addressed a 50-yard setback where traps and snares cannot be set on either side of the trail. It provided also for a quarter-mile setback from all the trailheads, campgrounds and along the Seward Highway. Another part of that amendment required all trappers to identify their traps with trap tags to show ownership. He related that of the six dogs that were trapped, actually two were caught in the park and four were caught outside of it. He said the board also reduced the length of the trapping season by two weeks. He said they worked with the trappers to eliminate some conflicts and he was sure it would come back before them several times until something changed.

[4:22:01 PM](#)

LEWIS E. BRADLEY, nominee to the Board of Game, Mat-Su, said he has been an Alaskan resident for 35 years and enjoys the last frontier lifestyle of hunting and fishing and working hard. He wants the same opportunities for his grandchildren and all

Alaskans. Our state needs prudent management of our natural resources that provides fair and equitable use on a sustainable level. He said that no one person knows it all and we are all Alaskan and need to work together using knowledge and experience to make wise decisions to restore the abundance of fish and wildlife where populations are declining.

He said he was born in Hot Springs, Arkansas, 62 years ago and graduated from high school in Oregon in 1964. He got married in 1965 and came to Alaska with the military in 1967. He quipped that he has some negotiating experience - since he raised two children. He was discharged in 1970 and got a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Education in 1972. He wanted to come back to Alaska, but there were no jobs in physical education, so he went an extra year and got a degree in elementary education K-8. He taught in Wasilla for the last 27 years. He got a private pilot's license in 1985. He coached after-school sports for 26 years and co-founded the Wasilla Little Dribblers Basketball Program with Reed Smith.

4:26:01 PM

CHAIR HUGGINS asked if he had any success in picking up antlers this winter.

MR. BRADLEY replied that he had been too busy and he usually spends two weeks to a month in the spring doing that.

CHAIR HUGGINS said several constituents have contacted his office concerned that there may be a restriction on people being able to pick up antlers in some state controlled areas, and a lot of people don't necessarily support that.

MR. BRADLEY replied there are.

CHAIR HUGGINS asked him to keep that on his radar screen.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked him describe his academic background in the areas of biology and wildlife management.

MR. BRADLEY answered that he has a minor degree in biology from the University of Oregon, and while he doesn't have a formal science background, he has learned a lot just through hunting and being around the state. He said all hunters should be concerned about conservation of habitat, bull/cow ratios and birth and survival of yearlings.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what types of evidence should be presented to the board to demonstrate a need for intensive game management.

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MR. BRADLEY answered they have to show that how many animals are in the area; for instance, bull/cow ratios should be 40/100. They like to have high calving numbers and yearling survival. When these ratios go down and there aren't enough animals for subsistence, then you have to look at what is causing the decline. If the predator ratio with bears or wolves is up, you might try to change that.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if scientific principles should be used in determining intensive management.

MR. BRADLEY answered yes, but ADF&G needs the budget to do the science.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he has any reservations regarding current predator control.

MR. BRADLEY answered no, but predators are an important part of the equation and you have to make sure it's done properly and you don't overdo it.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he has an opinion on rural versus urban preference.

MR. BRADLEY answered that people who live adjacent to the big game should have some priority if game numbers are down.

[4:34:32 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGGINS asked if he wanted to highlight anything that surprised him or that he learned at the board meeting.

MR. BRADLEY replied that he was surprised at the amount and thoroughness of the information that was given out at the meetings.

[4:36:48 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGGINS asked if the committee should be aware of any special conflicts.

MR. BRADLEY replied that he hadn't been on the board long enough. The Defenders of Wildlife asked him if he was for

predator control and he answered yes when populations are depressed. He stated his position is that:

We're all defenders of wildlife; we're just defending, maybe, different groups. We're not just defending the ungulates for prey populations to eat. If you manage for high populations, then they can withstand more predators. If you let it go a natural cycle like they are indicating, then you end up with predators eventually will knock their populations down and then a lot of the predators may die off from starvation. So you've got a natural cycle; they go up and down and no one wins except for - well, actually no one does. But if you keep it at a balanced level, then to me everybody wins.

The person he was talking to about this issue said he couldn't support him for the board because of his position on predator control.

[4:38:43 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he sees anything the board should do differently.

MR. BRADLEY replied that since 80 percent of the funding came from out of state hunting licenses, he didn't know what the solution would be. Maybe some people could pay more for licenses especially compared to other states and they could also put more people in the field to help manage the animals.

MR. BRADLEY also suggested that bears and wolves should be managed the same as the ungulates, because sometimes people want to take a bear or a wolf once in their lifetime. There used to be an unlimited supply of animals, but now there isn't. Unit 14 C became a park and eventually went to a permit and now Unit 14 A has 38 guides and it just can't stand the pressure. Hunters get forced into smaller and smaller areas and Talkeetna sheep are already depressed. Maybe the state is headed towards a permit system statewide. If that's the case, a lot of decisions will have to be made. "But the number-one priority has to be the animals and whatever it takes to keep them around forever."

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what the primary limiting factors affecting wildlife population in areas 13 B are (Glennallen).

MR. BRADLEY replied in Alaska it's usually mostly weather and then predators, both men and wild predators; to a smaller degree it's the habitat and the available browse.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if too many big game hunters from outside are allowed in.

MR. BRADLEY answered yes; he thought that guides should be residents because they feel more responsibility towards the state. Outside guides come up here for a couple months, take a lot of game even bringing up outside assistant guides and then they leave the state and take the money with them. They also don't feel the same kind of stewardship of the land that resident guides do. He definitely wanted to see some changes there.

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SENATOR GREEN thanked him and hoped he felt the same one year from now. She asked who he replaced.

MR. BRADLEY answered Mr. Somerville's seat.

[4:45:15 PM](#)

CRAIG L. FLEENER, nominee for the Board of Game, said he is originally from Fort Yukon and is currently living in Anchorage to finish up his masters degree in Anchorage that he started in 1999.

MR. FLEENER said he served from 1986-1990 in the Marines, joined the National Guard in 1991 and is still serving. He has worked mostly in natural resources type jobs. He has been an environmental coordinator and a natural resources manager; he has done subsistence surveys and fisheries work in the Yukon Flats. He was the regional wildlife biologist for the Counsel of Athabascan Tribal Governments with the 10 villages of the Yukon Flats. He has served on a number of boards and committees over issues like salmon population problems; he currently serves on a committee on bison. He served for about 10 years on the Eastern Interior Federal Regional Subsistence Advisory Committee with several years as chairman, but he had just resigned from that position.

SENATOR GREEN asked the chair if he had ever met Mr. Fleener.

CHAIR HUGGINS replied that he had met him in this very building. He has an astonishing list of accomplishments.

[4:48:52 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGGINS asked how he became a nominee.

MR. FLEENER replied that some people out there kind of like him. One of his major goals and partial accomplishment in life has been bridging the gap between the indigenous community in Alaska and the non-native community so they can work together to solve problems that are common to everyone. Because of that he has been seen as a person people can work with. He has friends who serve in a number of different capacities including the environmental community, the Native community and the Outdoor Council. Several folks put his name forward and then the Governor called him.

CHAIR HUGGINS went specifically to a 2001 study that looked at beaver dam influence on fish distribution in the Black River drainage and asked him what he found.

MR. FLEENER answered that it was not what he thought it would be. He thought it would be an overwhelming display that beaver dams are bad for whitefish, because they block access to and from lakes, and he wanted to have them removed. One of the things they are trying to determine is where whitefish spawn and while it's still a big question, one of the possibilities is that they spawn in some lakes. However, they found that typically there are enough high water events throughout the year to allow fish to go over the dams. A fish and game biologist said these over flow events provided plenty of time for the fish to actually get in and out.

On the other hand, he tries to incorporate knowledge of local people and his primary interest in doing the work was because whitefish is an extremely important subsistent food for folks in the Yukon Flats and they were having a lot of problems in getting them. They attribute it to the dams. One of the reasons it was so important as a research topic is because traditionally local populations actually broke down the beaver dams to get access to whitefish and that practice has fallen to the wayside.

[4:53:37 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS said his research papers are impressive and asked what his plans are after finishing his degree.

MR. FLEENER responded that he is unemployed and has been doing a little contract work to pay rent and tuition. He would prefer to live in Fort Yukon, but he needs to look for work as well. He explained, "Kind of the crazy thing about my degree is that it's

a degree in wildlife biology and for the last four or 'fivish' years, I've done more executive management stuff." So he might need to get another degree in management.

CHAIR HUGGINS said he was excited about him being on the board.

[4:55:59 PM](#)

SENATOR GREEN asked the secret behind his "fountain of youth."

MR. FLEENER replied moose meat and King salmon.

CHAIR HUGGINS asked him what was the largest moose he had seen on the hoof.

MR. FLEENER answered when he was doing moose surveys he once saw one with a 45-inch rack, but next to the three other moose he was standing next to his body was 300-400 pounds bigger.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he met with Mr. Fleener a couple of weeks ago and thought he was an extremely impressive person with and impressive resume.

[4:57:56 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGGINS announced that the committee did not have time to get to the Board of Fisheries nominations today, but they would be taken up next week.

[4:58:09 PM](#)

WADE WILLIS, 20-year resident of Alaska, said he makes a living in the tourism business and supported Mr. Fleener's nomination. He provides diversity to the board, scientific knowledge and understanding of the complex issues before the board.

He also reminded the committee that the Board of Game has been mandated to represent all Alaskans and presently it doesn't have diverse representation. Only 14 percent of the state buys hunting licenses. Not one person on the board is a non consumptive user in the arena of tourism; however the tourism industry is the largest employer in this state - and they certainly have a vested interest in their wildlife resources. They bring more money into the state than any other industry besides oil. He said, "I'm very disappointed that it seems that this administration is going to continue to try to stack the Board of Game with a single user group - basically hunters and trappers."

MR. WILLIS remarked that Senator Green was working to diversify the Board of Fish, so he was asking them now to work to diversify the Board of Game, BUT and he didn't think Mr. Bradley offered that diversity. Further, he said Mr. Bradley's few classes in biology over 25 years ago and the fact that he is writing a book and picks up horn doesn't give him the ability to understand and effectively deal with multiple user group issues on the Board of Game.

He was also concerned that this committee didn't ask any questions about working with the public intent on aerial predatory control. In 2000 aerial predator control was passed with the understanding that it would be done by ADF&G biologists and using scientific information. In 2004, the record shows that ADF&G advised the Board of Game not to initiate predator control programs, but they did it anyhow - because the board has no diversity. He emphasized again that the public has a vested interest in non-consumptive uses.

SENATOR GREEN asked if he or anyone he knows applied to be on the Board of Game.

MR. WILLIS answered that he didn't know of anyone who had applied, but he also knew that many of the nominees hadn't applied either, but it's not a case that no one wants to be on the board. A lot of folks don't understand the process of getting there.

SENATOR GREEN said generally there are more applicants for board positions and generally people apply for more than one board, and she asked him to share that information with his cohorts.

[5:04:19 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS said Mr. Willis implied that tourism outstrips commercial fisheries for jobs and impacts on the state and he asked him to send him information that would show that's the case.

MR. WILLIS said he would be happy to show him.

[5:05:09 PM](#)

BRUCE KNOWLES, Chair, Susitna River Fish and Game Advisory Committee, said he lived in Willow. He said the advisory committees didn't get word that this hearing would be held today and they weren't able to get a consensus on how to vote on the new appointments. He asked them to work hard to get out the word about these meetings.

5:06:20 PM

CHAIR HUGGINS said the meeting was noticed last Thursday and advertised in addition to that. "There is a process, but sometimes it falls short and we'll make a very deliberate effort to make sure you're aware of it."

5:06:43 PM

PAUL SHADURA, Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee, Kenai, supported Mr. Spraker's nomination saying he has shown the public that he is steadfast in the support of management practices that have benefited all consumptive users within the state; he is a true guardian of the resource.

5:07:41 PM

STEVE RUNYAN, representing himself, Wasilla, said Mr. Bradley has great personal integrity regardless of his lack of experience with any one user group. He spends a lot of time in the field and can make good decisions. He has good history in this state with following game populations.

Regarding the tourism interests, Mr. Runyan said, he did snow machining and four-wheeling expeditions and the number-one wildlife they viewed on these trips was moose. Therefore, efforts by the Board of Game to increase levels of moose population anywhere in the state benefits not only the hunters, but those tourists who would like to view wildlife. Wolf sightings are extremely rare even by experienced people in tourism. The animal the average tourist wants most to see is moose. There are more people to see moose than there are hunters to take them. However, he thought Mr. Willis's interests are very well served by the current Board of Game. He was impressed with Mr. Fleener's testimony and he would be a good addition. Mr. Spraker has been doing a great job so he should be kept on.

5:11:02 PM

RICKY GEASE, representing himself, supported Mr. Spraker. Mr. Gease said he is also the executive director of the Kenai River Sport Fishing Association. He had many interactions with Mr. Spraker as the museum manager and the executive director of the Kenai Visitors and Cultural Center in Kenai and found him a strong advocate of professional wildlife management in Alaska. He thought his years of service in the department brought a good expertise to the board and provided an excellent perspective.

In regards to the two new appointments, he said that after listening to their testimony today, he would support both of

them. Mr. Fleener has experience on the eastern Interior subsistence board, which brings good experience to the board process.

MR. GEASE said on the tourism issue, that he was the executive director of the Kenai Convention and Visitor Bureau for a couple of years and worked with it for six years. He pointed out that both consumptive and non-consumptive users are important. A lot of state revenues come through the wildlife tours and marine tours out of the Kenai Fjords, specifically. Whale watching and birding opportunities are great for the non consumptive users. But the number-one manner in which revenues are generated outside of organized tours is through consumptive use. However, game tours with guides generate large incomes and those get distributed throughout all portions of the state along with sport fishing.

[5:13:58 PM](#)

GARY HOLLIER, representing himself, Soldotna, supported Mr. Spraker for reconfirmation. He said in the late 70s it was hard to get a moose and someone with vision put in a spike for 50 inch regulation in the mid-80s and now they have a 30-day season. Mr. Spraker was instrumental with that and had the foresight to do something positive for the resource and the people. If it wasn't for him, they would probably be down to four or five-day seasons.

CHAIR HUGGINS, finding no further testimony, closed public testimony. He read the Senate Confirmation Committee report saying the Senate Resources Committee recommends the appointments be forwarded to a joint session for consideration. This didn't reflect any intent by any of the members to vote for or against the confirmation of the individuals during any further sessions. Committee members signed the forwarding letters.

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Huggins adjourned the meeting at [5:17:45 PM](#).