

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 21, 2014

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator Fred Dyson, Vice Chair
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Anna Fairclough
Senator Hollis French

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Lesil McGuire

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 160

"An Act authorizing the commissioner of natural resources to implement a hunting guide concession program or otherwise limit the number of individuals authorized to conduct big game commercial guiding on state land."

- MOVED SB 160 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 28

"An Act relating to the sale of timber on state land; establishing the Susitna State Forest; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 28(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 161(RES)

"An Act relating to auctions or raffles for big game harvest permits and to the selection of nonprofit

organizations to conduct auctions and raffles for the Department of Fish and Game."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 160

SHORT TITLE: DNR: HUNTING GUIDES, CONCESSION PROGRAM

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) COGHILL

02/07/14	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/07/14	(S)	RES, FIN
03/14/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/14/14	(S)	<Bill Hearing Postponed>
03/17/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/17/14	(S)	Heard & Held
03/17/14	(S)	MINUTE(RES)
03/19/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/19/14	(S)	Heard & Held
03/19/14	(S)	MINUTE(RES)
03/21/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 28

SHORT TITLE: SUSITNA STATE FOREST; SALE OF TIMBER

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/18/13	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/13	(S)	RES, FIN
03/19/14	(S)	RES WAIVED PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE, RULE 23
03/21/14	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HB 161

SHORT TITLE: AUCTIONS FOR BIG GAME HARVEST PERMITS

SPONSOR(s): GATTIS

03/11/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/11/13	(H)	RES
04/10/13	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

04/10/13 (H) Heard & Held
 04/10/13 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 02/19/14 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 02/19/14 (H) Heard & Held
 02/19/14 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 02/24/14 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 02/24/14 (H) Moved CSHB 161(RES) Out of
 Committee
 02/24/14 (H) MINUTE(RES)
 02/26/14 (H) RES RPT CS(RES) 5DP
 02/26/14 (H) DP: JOHNSON, OLSON, SEATON,
 SADDLER, FEIGE
 03/03/14 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 03/03/14 (H) VERSION: CSHB 161(RES)
 03/05/14 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/05/14 (S) RES
 03/21/14 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

CHAD HUTCHISON

Staff to Senator John Coghill
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Commented on SB 160 for the sponsor.

CLARK COX, Natural Resource Manager
 Division of Mining, Land and Water
 Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
 Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained SB 160.

CHRIS MAISCH, State Forester and Director
 Division of Forestry
 Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
 Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 28.

WAYNE NICHOLS, Professional Forester representing himself

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 28.

NICK STEEN, Ruffed Grouse Society

Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 28.

ERIN MCLARNEN, representing "the recreational users of Alaska"

Willow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 28.

RICK ROGERS, Executive Director

Resource Development Council (RDC)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 28.

ANDY ROGERS

Alaska Chamber of Commerce

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 28.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN GATTIS

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 161.

DOUG VINCENT-LANG, Director

Division of Wildlife Conservation

Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Commented on HB 161 and was available for questions.

FORMER-SENATOR CON BUNDE, representing himself

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HB 161.

BRIAN JUDY, Alaska State Liaison
National Rifle Association (NRA)
Sacramento, California
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HB 161.

ELAINA SPRAKER, Clinic Director
Kenai Peninsula Women on Target/Teens on Target
Kenai, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HB 161.

MIKE CRAWFORD, President
Alaska Kenai Peninsula Chapter, Safari Club
International
Soldotna, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HB 161.

MIKE TINKER
Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association
Fairbanks, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HB 161.

DANA FALLUCCA-LINGOFELT, member, Board of Directors
Outdoor Heritage Foundation
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HB 161.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:41 PM](#)

CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dyson, French, Bishop, and Chair Giessel.

SB 160-DNR: HUNTING GUIDES, CONCESSION PROGRAM

[3:31:24 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced SB 160 to be up for consideration. She said the committee had received letters both of support and opposition to it.

[3:31:30 PM](#)

CHAD HUTCHISON, staff to Senator John Coghill, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, said there were compelling reasons to pass SB 160. It's good for the resource and the resident hunters and, to a certain extent, it stops BLM and the federal government from filling the void if the state does not act.

[3:32:33 PM](#)

CLARK COX, Natural Resource Manager, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Anchorage, Alaska, said he had been involved with this program since 2007 and that issuing land use and commercial recreation permits is one of those commercial use activities that they authorize and it's their primary interaction with the big game guides.

MR. COX said they had heard a lot about how both boards regulate the industry and it's important to note that they both support development of the guide concession program (GCP). He said the Board of Game can deal with conflicts and issues as they relate to wildlife, but it's difficult for them to deal with land use issues and overcrowding. It can affect the number of hunters in the field by reducing the overall hunting opportunity but not by regulating spacial distribution; only the DNR can do that.

He said the Big Game Commercial Services Board has rules in statute limiting and regulating guides and where they register, and any changes would have to be done through legislative action.

[3:34:19 PM](#)

He touched on a couple of the primary comments the committee had heard, the first being about how new guys can get into the industry. He explained that the primary difference between the full and the limited concessions is the number of employees that each one

could employ. The full concession holders are allowed to employ up to six assistant guides and the limited are allowed to employ only one assistant guide. This allows for the selected full concession holders to offer more hunts, employ more staff, and operate a larger business while the limited concessioners run fewer hunts and smaller operations, and this gives them a chance to be able to compete for a full concession at some point in the future by gaining experience in an area.

[3:35:23 PM](#)

MR. COX said another common comment they had heard was about transferability, and they do understand the desire to be able to sell and transfer these areas, but the Owsichuk decision made it very clear that that was one of the primary faults of the prior system. The common use clause in the Alaska Constitution also makes that "a pretty steep hurdle to climb."

They heard a lot about how a GCP will or will not benefit the Alaska resident hunter. It is designed to benefit hunters by reducing the number of big game guides in the more controversial areas, thus reducing conflicts in the field, and increasing the quality of the hunting opportunity and wildlife conservation. Additionally, the whole concession concept is based on the competitive nature of the applicants who will be scored on a number of factors, including their history of user conflicts and their strategies to avoid future conflicts. The GCP seeks to award concessions to those guides with cleaner histories in the field and in the court room.

[3:36:36 PM](#)

He said they also heard that problems are only in certain "hot" areas, and they agree. They talked about addressing this by staggering areas so as to not impact the whole state at once, but then they realized that just dealing with small areas would push unselected

guides into other outlying areas and create problems there.

They have heard from the very outset about transporters and believe this group can be addressed after conducting further research and evaluation with them.

They heard that implementing this program would reduce the number of guides by 50 or 60 percent, so he provided a graph showing the number of guides who actually ran a hunt and the number of available opportunities there would be should this program exist. In addition, 44 million acres of private land in Alaska is available to use.

MR. COX said they also heard that the application process was simply a test for guides to hire someone to prepare a fancy application to win an area, but DNR wants the operation plan and commitments made therein to be incorporated into the authorization that will be evaluated annually to assure that concession holders are operating consistent with the terms they were granted.

In closing, Mr. Cox said, they heard from many parties, both in support and not, that problems exist in the guiding industry and in the field and that those issues need to be addressed. This program would be an additional tool for DNR, the Board of Game, and the Big Game Commercial Services Board to use to address industry issues. The mission of the program is to encourage land stewardship, support wildlife conservation, and to promote a healthy guiding industry for the benefit of the people of Alaska. He said this is their first crack at developing a program like this and they are remaining flexible to make changes to it.

CHAIR GIESSEL said she was waiting for a quorum and set SB 160 aside.

[3:40:20 PM](#)

At ease from 3:40:20 to 3:40:27 p.m.

[3:40:27 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE joined the committee.

SENATOR DYSON moved SB 160, version 28-LS1399\A, from committee to the next committee of referral with attached fiscal notes and individual recommendations. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

[3:40:59 PM](#)

At ease from 3:40 to 3:42 p.m.

SB 28-SUSITNA STATE FOREST; SALE OF TIMBER

[3:42:25 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced SB 28 to be up for consideration.

[3:43:12 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL moved Amendment 1.

28-GS1741\A.1
Bullock
3/20/14

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR GIESSEL
TO: SB 28

Page 2, line 11, following "chapter.":

Insert "The transportation objective for the Susitna State Forest is to provide access for timber management and multiple use within the Susitna State Forest."

Page 7, line 14, through page 8, line 2:

Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 11, lines 12 - 23:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 14, lines 14 - 19:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 17, lines 11 - 27:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 21, lines 3 - 19:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 24, line 22, through page 25, line 7:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 27, lines 11 - 22:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following paragraphs accordingly.

Page 32, line 8:
Delete "2013"
Insert "2014"

SENATOR FRENCH objected for discussion purposes.

CHAIR GIESSEL explained that this amendment adds intent language on page 2 of the bill and removes certain

parcels from the Susitna State Forest. The intent language states a transportation objective for the forest to provide access for multiple use and timber management, and then some segments are removed from the State Forest.

CHRIS MAISCH, State Forester and Director, Division of Forestry, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Anchorage, Alaska, explained that the proposed amendment is based on the public process they had been going through for this bill, comments by local government and others about concerns with needing additional lands close to communities for potential expansion of them, particularly near the communities of the City of Houston, Wasilla, and up along the east corridor of the Parks Highway. This amendment would delete parcels on the east side strip that run North-South, a relatively narrow corridor; this would garner additional support for this legislation.

The other item concerned access to the State Forest similar to the intent that already exists in the Tanana Valley State Forest that says all parts of the State Forests over time will be accessed with a mixture of all-season and winter roads.

SENATOR FRENCH asked him to summarize the general geographic changes.

[3:45:22 PM](#)

MR. MAISCH said he could tell him the block names, but not exactly which lines they were on the map. There are four blocks; the first is the northern parcels (the Talkeetna block on their map); the descriptions address the Kashwitna parcel, the Willard Cash parcel, and the Houston parcel.

SENATOR BISHOP asked if parcels on the east side of the highway were being stricken and the State Forest would be on the west side.

MR. MAISCH answered yes. The stricken lands still be managed for forestry, because they are classified in the Area Plan as forestry land. He said it would be easier to change the potential uses of those lands when the Area Plans are updated.

SENATOR FRENCH withdrew his objection.

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further objection, announced that Amendment 1 was adopted. She invited Mr. Maisch to go through the rest of the bill.

[3:47:42 PM](#)

MR. MAISCH continued to explain that there are two parts to the bill; one is the State Forest portion, which he would speak to first, and then the part of the bill, which specifically addresses his timber sale authorities.

He said the State of Alaska owns and manages 9.5 million acres in the Matanuska Valley and that two Area Plans - the Matanuska/Susitna Area Plan and the Southeast Susitna Area Plan - currently are identified for that area and have both recently been updated. Both are high-level allocations for different types of uses for state-owned land; State Forest, recreation, habitat, and disposal are some of the general classifications. This proposal originally suggested 663,000 acres and 33 parcels, but with the amendment the acreage drops down to 688,000 acres and 20 parcels.

He said the primary purpose of the State Forest, by statute, is for timber management that allows other multiple uses of the forest to continue. One of the key concerns they heard in various public meetings and other discussions with local governments was that they wanted to be assured that the same type and same scale of use would continue to occur on the State Forests, and that is the case. In fact, they feel over time, as

additional access is developed that many uses of the State Forest will benefit, particularly from a hunting and habitat management standpoint, which is where many of those comments came from.

[3:49:51 PM](#)

MR. MAISCH recapped that the primary use for the State Forest is timber management consistent with multiple use and sustained yield principles. It is governed by the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act, which also affects state, municipal, and private lands, and which is primarily designed to protect fish habitat and water quality. So, mandatory stream buffers are required in harvest units with a large number of rivers already having the recreation corridors along them (that in the Valley are a quarter mile on each side of the river).

He said the Forest Management Plan for the State Forest must be completed within three years of the Forest being established and that it has a very extensive public process, including establishment of the Citizens Advisory Committee to give advice on uses and any potential conflicts that could develop. The Tanana Forest already has an advisory committee, but not the Southeast State Forest or the Haines State Forest, because they are much smaller in size, and in the case of the Southeast State Forest, very remote, so there aren't a lot of different users using those lands.

MR. MAISCH said it was left up to their discretion as to whether to establish that Citizen Advisory Committee or not; it would have 12 members that would mirror the Board of Forestry that has 9 members, but it would represent a range of constituents, users - business and local government in the Valley - and they would be advisory and appointed by the Division of Forestry.

He said the Management Plan will address future transportation planning, timber sales, and kind of all

the standard things one would like to see in a plan about how they intend to manage that property.

[3:51:05 PM](#)

MR. MAISCH said there had been extensive public outreach consisting of community meetings as part of the Area Planning process where the State Forest concept was discussed starting in 2009 and six open houses across the Valley in that timeframe, in 2012 there were 12 public meetings in communities up and down the Valley, and 10 meetings in 2013 including 2 webinars which tried to reach the remote areas of the borough where people couldn't easily travel into the community meetings. It was so successful that they plan to continue those. They also had 11 different news articles, radio stories, or other topics in the Valley in publications statewide on the topic of the State Forest. So, it has been well-vetted and discussed among the different interest groups. They also recently received support from the Matanuska Susitna Borough at their Tuesday Assembly meeting with a vote of 6-1 for a resolution in support of the State Forest concept. Numerous other letters in the record do the same thing. He paused for questions.

[3:52:29 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked what the primary species is in that area.

MR. MAISCH replied spruce and white birch for hard wood and black cotton wood and cotton wood, and an occasional tamarack and aspen.

SENATOR MICCICHE asked what the state practice is for reforestation after harvest.

MR. MAISCH explained that three different regions in the state are under the Forest Practices Act, which requires reforestation of harvested lands within five years; that's in a "free-to-grow" state, a seedling

that is essentially growing aggressively and vigorously and not overtopped by vegetation and grass.

Finding no further questions on the forest portion of the plan, she invited him to go on to the timber sale provisions and authorities.

[3:53:43 PM](#)

MR. MAISCH said some background on the department's authorities would help put into context what they are trying to do with this change. Currently, the Division of Forestry has five different statutes that allow it to sell timber using different methodologies in Title 38.05.115 and .117. The sale method used most frequently statewide is the competitive sale process in .120; those are sealed bid or oral outcry sales offered in their different area offices. They are competitive with the sale going to the highest price.

A couple of other sales methods encourage local and domestic manufacturing; in Southeast Alaska if they offered all the timber sales by the .120 process, all the logs would go to the round log export market, because it is a much more valuable market against which the domestic market cannot compete. So they have developed other alternatives that still have a competitive piece on the front end, but then allow them to negotiate the sale. Mr. Maisch explained that they tried to do just round-log export restrictions in the late 70s and that case found its way all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court where the state lost it, because they were trying to regulate inter-state commerce, which a state cannot do. That is where the other authorities have sprung from: creative ways to encourage domestic processing, create jobs and more of an economy in the local communities.

The first one is ".115 authority," which are sales for less than 500,000 board feet. Those typically go to a small saw mill or firewood operator. The next one is

the ".117 authority," which is for salvage sales after a fire, insect and disease, and wind throw. It is an expedited process to get that wood to market as quickly as possible to salvage some of its value. The ".118 sales" are the large negotiated sales for 20-25 years, the topic of this legislation. And the ".123 sale," which is value-added sales for up to 10 years, are meant to provide raw materials to mills and facilities that add a high level of value to the product, like the pellet mill in Fairbanks. A list of materials that qualify for high-value production can be found in 11 AAC 71.055.

MR. MAISCH said that their ".118 authority" has three criteria that have to be in place to use: the census district that the proposal is in has to have a high level of local unemployment, it has to have an under-utilized annual allowable cut in the timber supply, and it has to have under-utilized manufacturing capability at the facility that would use it. All three of those are hard to align especially the high unemployment piece. This bill proposes to strike all three of those clauses, and that would make it easier to use and be consistent across the state.

One other thing SB 28 does is that currently the language in that statute just refers to timber, and to make that more inclusive and clear they added, "timber and fiber" (meaning all types of wood products).

[3:58:01 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP commented that Mr. Maisch did a good overview and really knows his timber.

SENATOR FRENCH asked if this is like former Senator Linda Menard's proposed legislation.

MR. MAISCH answered yes; the forestry proposal is essentially the same, but it didn't have the change to the timber piece (.118).

3:58:53 PM

CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony.

3:59:03 PM

WAYNE NICHOLS, Professional Forester and member, Board of Forestry and Society of American Foresters, representing himself, Juneau, Alaska, supported SB 28. He said compared to other states, the Alaska State Forest has a lot of benefits, the primary one being that it makes good management of it possible by well-qualified professional people of which Mr. Maisch is "an outstanding example." His staff also have other disciplines that relate to it. Designation as a State Forest enables investments like planting a tree, a 100-year investment, instead of the land being subject to being changed for some other use. It is also valuable in that better roads and bridges can be built. Pruning and thinning are also long-term investments.

SENATOR DYSON thanked him for his service.

4:03:20 PM

NICK STEEN, Ruffed Grouse Society, Wasilla, Alaska, supported SB 28. He said the president of the Southcentral Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society, Dr. Michael Fuller, recently contacted several members of the legislature expressing opposition to SB 28 as written. He explained that they enthusiastically support the concept of a State Forest, however the accelerated development in the Alaska Bowl and the Matanuska Susitna Valley is transforming the character of the area into an urban sprawl. A forest would preserve public lands and resources for effective forest management that promotes economic use of the forest resources, enhancement of wildlife habitat close to major population areas, and maintenance a large block of land for public recreation. Their concern is the fractured nature of the proposed boundaries, and

Dr. Fuller asked him to express his and the Chapter's conditional support of SB 28.

Their Chapter has been working during the development of the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP) to establish a State Forest on all unencumbered state land west of the Susitna River between the Beluga River and the south boundary of the Denali State and National Parks draining into the Susitna River. They oppose the SMAP as developed since it has designated a series of non-contiguous lands for forest management interspersed with land designated as mining or for disposal as recreation and agriculture. This hampers effective forest management and restricts public and multiple use.

SB 28 perpetuates this approach by identifying only the land designated for forest management by the SMAP as a Susitna Forest. It does not address the issues of access for effective forest management, uniform regulations for total area management, boundary identification for recreational use, and the loss of public access for recreational purposes by transferring land to private ownership. However, there is insufficient time in their mind in the legislative session to make the major changes needed to fix these issues. Therefore, they feel that getting the Forest established is critical and would like to support the current bill, but ask their help in making it more effective by considering modifications to the boundaries in future legislation and directing the DNR to suspend implementation of any land disposal programs in the SMAP west of the Susitna River until their concerns are addressed.

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH joined the committee.

[4:06:41 PM](#)

ERIN MCLARNEN, member, Board of Forestry, representing "the recreational users of Alaska", Willow, Alaska,

supported SB 28. She also personally supported the Susitna State Forest. Not only would it create jobs and stimulate the economy over time, but it would guarantee all users a place to recreate.

MS. MCLARNEN said she is a 17-year long-distance dog musher and frequently uses state forest lands for training her dogs. These are her favorite runs for their access and the roads created during harvest, and she wanted more users to have those same opportunities.

She said the local Willow dog mushers have formed a strong relationship with the Division of Forestry and DNR, as well as the logging operators. In September they all come together to talk about their harvest plans for roads and then the mushers overlap their trails onto that. A lot of the operators will actually reroute their trails during harvest times so that those training grounds won't be lost, actually suspending harvest for two days for a 100-mile kids' dog race on their trail system.

[4:09:04 PM](#)

RICK ROGERS, Executive Director, Resource Development Council (RDC), Anchorage, Alaska, said he is also a certified forester that had performed forestry on and off throughout Alaska since 1981 and supported SB 28. It represents the state committing a long-term land base to promote long-term sustainable forestry practices.

He said LNG is speed dating compared to forestry, because forestry is an extremely long-term commitment. Forest rotations in Alaska can span from 60 to 100-plus years. So, if they are going to do the job right and encourage long-term forest productivity and encourage the private sector to invest in what it takes to harvest and process that timber to generate jobs and create wealth in our communities, then we need to commit the land base so they know that state is

committed and that the land is going to be available. The lands in question are already being managed for forestry, and this bill makes it official.

MR. ROGERS also noted there were over 3 million acres of other legislatively-designated lands for things like parks, refuges and public use areas throughout the Mat-Su area and a designated working State Forest is needed to balance that out. He said this isn't a new experiment in Alaska that already has the Tanana Valley State Forest, the Haines State Forest, and the Southeast State Forest, and they are all good models from which to build one in the Susitna Valley.

He noted that Mr. Steen encouraged some future look at boundaries and that historically the Tanana Forest has had at least one, and maybe several, modifications over its history. So nothing keeps them from improving on the boundaries that are presented today. He hadn't looked at the amendments in detail, but would give deference to the committee and DNR for working with the local community. If they can gain support by reducing some of those areas, perhaps they could be considered in the future for adding to the State Forest at a later date.

MR. ROGERS summarized that this bill represents a long-term commitment to good forest management and the private sector is likely to respond favorably to that. It is consistent with the state's constitutional mandate to manage these resources sustainably for the long term benefit of Alaskans.

[4:13:34 PM](#)

ANDY ROGERS, Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Anchorage, Alaska, supported SB 28. He liked the 100-plus year commitment and thought it was an opportunity for the state to be a good steward of its resources and to ensure long-term economic stability with the potential for growth.

[4:16:19 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further comments, closed public testimony and moved conceptual Amendment 2. She explained that this management plan would not be as well written as the one for the Tanana State Forest, but adding the following language from that plan to page 32, line 2, would resolved that:

(e) The wildlife management objective of the Susitna State Forest is the production of wildlife for a high level of sustained yield for human use through habitat improvement techniques to the extent consistent with the primary purpose of a state forest under AS 41.17.20.

CHAIR GIESSEL explained that this amendment would maximize the area for wildlife management and not just for timber management.

SENATOR FRENCH objected for discussion purposes and said he preferred to see the amendment in the bill and to have enough time for consideration of it.

CHAIR GIESSEL responded that it goes to the Finance Committee next.

SENATOR FRENCH withdrew his objection.

[4:19:22 PM](#)

MR. MAISCH said he supported the conceptual amendment and that its language is currently in AS 41.17.400 (e) for the Tanana Valley State Forest.

SENATOR BISHOP said that should go a long way to make the Ruffed Grouse people, who would hunt grouse there, a lot happier.

MR. MAISCH said he hoped so, too; they are serious about habitat and forest management that really go hand-in-hand.

CHAIR GIESSEL announced that Amendment 2 was adopted.

MR. MAISCH summarized that this is a statement about long-term commitment and a sustainable resource that can be managed to help Alaska's communities. It's about the "the triple bottom line" of society, environment, and the economy. When done right it can get good results for the people of the state.

[4:21:18 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON moved to report SB 28, version 28-GS1741\A, as amended, from committee to the next committee of referral with attached fiscal notes and individual recommendations. There were no objections and CSSB 28(RES) passed from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

[4:21:50 PM](#)

At ease from 4:21 to 4:23 p.m.

HB 161-AUCTIONS FOR BIG GAME HARVEST PERMITS

[4:23:32 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced HB 161 to be up for consideration.

[4:23:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN GATTIS, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HB 161, said the bill updates the governor's license program. This is an economic process for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to generate funds for management of the state's wildlife resources. The department may donate permits to non-profit organizations that are incorporated in Alaska to hold big game permit auctions or raffles. The sale of relatively few permits can

generate a large amount of money to fund the department's conservation and protection efforts.

She explained that the governor's license program was created in 1997 and since 2009 it has generated over \$450,000 to the Fish and Game Fund. The department can issue up to 40 permits under HB 161; statute currently allows up to 19 permits. Putting the numbers in perspective, the department is issuing over 4,000 permits for big game species for 2014/15, and historically around half of the available permits are issued and of that half, 46 percent are utilized in a hunt. This means that around 25 percent of the total permits issued were actually used.

HB 161 has two sections that list permits available for donation for raffle or auction just like the current statute does: section 1 gives 100 percent of the proceeds to a non-profit under the stipulation that they use the generated funds to promote education in outdoor traditions. This section permits up to 4 Etolin Island elk, 1 bison, and 1 Dall sheep. The elk and the bison are in statute already; the sheep permit is 1 additional under this bill.

Section 2 of the bill has permits for 2 Dall sheep and two bison. These are already in statute. HB 161 increases the number of permits from 2 to 4 for musk ox, brown or grizzly bear, moose, caribou, and wolf, and adds 4 permits each for black bear, goat, and elk. It also increases the percentage of revenues a non-profit can keep from 10 percent to 30 percent. This is necessary to incentivize groups to participate. The entirety of the money that goes to the non-profit has to be spent on outdoor education and conservation projects in a manner approved by the department.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS explained that at 10 percent some of the raffling groups were leaving permits on the table and said that there was a certain cost to doing

business and if they could get 30 percent to do what they would like to do under the department rules that would make more sense. As the program is written now, the group retains 10 percent of the proceeds and they can spend it any way they want so long as it isn't for political gain, which means that it can't be used for referendums, initiatives, or to give to any candidate to run.

With HB 161, a group actually retains 0 percent of the proceeds and it is required to spend the entirety on department-approved programs. Permits occupied by the governor's license program are taken out of the draw hunt. The program does not take permits directly from Alaskan hunters. She explained that when a resident hunter enters into the drawing for most hunts that person has the same chance of winning a permit as a non-resident hunter. Further, she said, this bill does not allow for out-of-season special hunts in closed areas and it does not allow for helicopters and other advantages to be used in tracking and hunting or transporting big game. If a permit is donated to a non-profit under this program and the permit does not sell, it is reentered into the drawing pool or, if it's late in the season, sold over the counter. These sales are mainly to resident hunters.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS said she and her staff have worked closely with the department as well as a large number of sporting groups to create the bill to benefit hunters and to ensure that the department has continued funding to manage this valuable resource well into the future.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked if her staff had anything to add.

[4:29:47 PM](#)

REID HARRIS, Staff to Representative Gattis, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, answered no.

[4:29:56 PM](#)

DOUG VINCENT-LANG, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), explained that HB 161 is an attempt to manage the governor's tag program in a more efficient and effective manner. Basically, they realized that if they give a greater percentage of these program receipts from the governor's tag program to a private non-profit to keep, the hope is that a rising tide will lift all ships including the contribution back to the department. But most importantly, it forms really foundational partnerships with the conservation community in that they get to keep 30 percent of the proceeds, which is focused on providing conservation education programs that ensures a future foundation of hunters and fishers across the state. They have to do those projects in partnership with the department's approval. Overall, this program would benefit the department and the conservation community by ensuring there is a steady source of funding for outdoor education and conservation programs.

[4:31:22 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP asked if helicopters are going to be allowed for harvest of sheep.

MR. VINCENT-LANG answered no; the intention is to basically put the same conditions as the Board of Game puts on these hunts for these species in those areas.

[4:32:24 PM](#)

FORMER-SENATOR CON BUNDE, representing himself, Anchorage, Alaska, supported HB 161. He related that he was the original author of the governor's TAGS bill. He had the good fortune of knowing some hunting "philanthropists" who return substantial financial support to the sport, and the TAGS program was a vehicle to do that. It met some resistance, but has been generally accepted as a good idea and it has worked very well in other states. But like all

legislation, after some trial and error and time it can stand some tweaking and he supported that and HB 161.

He said the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and its management of the state's hunting opportunities are supported by license fees and various taxes. Expanding TAGS in this manner will provide needed support for the ADF&G. He was personally aware that the original proposal to give 10 percent to these non-profits that promote outdoor education was not adequate to meet their cost of doing business and have enough left over to have any significant impact on their program.

[4:36:28 PM](#)

BRIAN JUDY, Alaska State Liaison, National Rifle Association (NRA), Sacramento, California, supported HB 161. It is a win-win for Alaska non-profits and Alaska sportsmen and women. It increases from 19 to 42 the number of permits available for auction, which should generate more money for department and non-profits to use for education in outdoor traditions and conservation, and wildlife protection programs in partnership with the department. This bill won't benefit NRA, but it could potentially benefit the Friends of the NRA non-profit program. Examples of some of the programs that have received their money in past are the Used Shotgun League, Small Game Hunting Clinics, Scholastic Clay Target Program, the Women on Target Program, the Youth Education Summit, and the Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program.

[4:38:45 PM](#)

ELAINA SPRAKER, Clinic Director, Kenai Peninsula Women on Target/Teens on Target, Kenai, Alaska, supported HB 161. She said their program started about six years ago when they took 8-10 teenage girls and trained them in firearms which included shotgun, pistol and rifle. From there, the mothers wanted to also learn firearm training and that is what inspired the Women on Target

Program, which is in its fourth year. She related the successes of clinic activities. She supported HB 161 because it will make these programs doable. Women are charged \$35 to join these clinics and they will shoot up to \$900 worth of ammo per clinic.

SENATOR MICCICHE thanked her for all the program did for his 18 year old.

4:41:38 PM

MIKE CRAWFORD, President, Alaska Kenai Peninsula Chapter of Safari Club International, Soldotna, Alaska, supported HB 161. He said of the Club has 200 chapters worldwide and two of them are in Alaska. He related that these two are both award-winning and are considered leaders. He said the national part of Safari Club International spent over \$1 million in last year's ADF&G projects that included Kenai moose research, chronic wasting disease on Kodiak Island, Kodiak Brown Bear studies, and the reintroduction of the wood bison. Some of the things they have supported are the Alaska Outdoor Heritage Foundation, National Archery in the Schools Program, the Women on Target and Teens on Target, and other youth-shooting sports. They also give a \$4,000 college scholarship each year. They have a very successful and popular women's and kid's pheasant hunt every fall where sportsmanship and gun safety is taught.

MR. CRAWFORD said they are good at raising funds to fulfill their mission and understand the need for funds for conservation of our wildlife. They are not being greedy but want to further conservation of wildlife working with ADF&G on their projects.

MR. CRAWFORD said that recently a Tok sheep tag sold for over \$160,000; these funds will go a long way for ADF&G. This bill will not eliminate other organizations that now qualify to get these tags.

4:44:12 PM

MIKE TINKER, Alaska Wildlife Conservation Association, Fairbanks, Alaska, supported HB 161. He related their fish and wildlife conservation issues saying that some of their products resulted in the passage of Alaska's intensive management law that got Alaskans out of the competition business for the last moose and into producing more wildlife for their use, and most recently a clarification on the use of the referendum process for allocation where they hope to get the state out of wolf and anti-hunting type of referendums.

MR. TINKER said the Association also fights some of the battles that government cannot fight from the standpoint of anti-hunters who use Alaska management principles to raise money for their various causes. They do not have any problem with the concept of raising more money for the ADF&G or for spending in some of the ways this proposal focuses on.

Attracting people by offering them more money is a pipedream, he said, and money earmarked for education programs can't be matched by the federal Robertson Pitman Funds. So, that might not be getting to the desired intent of putting money where the department would like it to go next. A consistent approach to fund raising for the department needs to be worked on by the department, the boards, the public and the legislature.

MR. TINKER said he hears the legislature voicing support for additional funds for the ADF&G, but they are a little concerned when the department says this program won't cost anything. Putting these agreements together will have administrative and management costs. So, the cost of HB 161 is not zero. He urged caution and having at least another hearing for more input.

In the sectional analysis, Mr. Tinker said number 4 says "the donation program will be healthier as its

appeal has been broadened," but he doubted that offering 42 permits versus 19 would broaden appeal.

4:51:02 PM

SENATOR BISHOP asked for his written comments to be forwarded to the committee.

MR. TINKER said he would be glad to prepare those comments.

4:52:02 PM

DANA FALLUCCA-LINGOFELT, member, Board of Directors, Outdoor Heritage Foundation, Anchorage, Alaska, supported HB 161. It is an important component in funding outdoor education opportunities for Alaskans. Funds generated from the governor's license proceeds will directly provide opportunities to more Alaskans to become educated ethical users of the state's natural resources.

She had participated in the Becoming an Outdoor Woman's (BOW) workshop, hunter information and training clinics, and had earned her hunter education mother loader certifications through the ADF&G. She said the department's program sponsored in conjunction with organizations such as the Ruffed Grouse Society, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Alaska Bow Hunters Association, Safari Club, National Rifle Association (NRA), and the Outdoor Heritage Foundation have provided ladies liker her the knowledge and the confidence to spot and stalk big game, fly fish in the best rivers on Earth, shoot proficiently with a variety of firearms and archery equipment, survive out in the Alaskan wilderness, the skills to field dress and care for her own animals, and how to cook it up on a campfire built by her.

In addition to developing a deep appreciation for the science and biologists that keep it all in balance, as a result of these programs she said she had become a

purchaser of fishing, trapping, and hunting licenses and tags, all of which contribute to revenues to the ADF&G. She had personally contributed over \$47,000 to the Alaskan economy since taking her first BOW workshop in 2004.

Countless women have told her that these programs have changed their lives. Many use their education and skills to teach their own sons and daughters the joys of outdoor pursuits. She volunteers to teach outdoor skills at the workshops. Alaskan educational opportunities supported by the Governor's license proceeds would include outdoor use camps in Fairbanks and Anchorage, the National Archery in the Schools Program statewide, Becoming an Outdoor Woman, and fishing clinics for ladies and families, small and big game hunting clinics, and additional certification programs to address Alaskan hunters' needs. She believes that outdoor education produces caring, conservationists and responsible users of Alaskan resources ensuring everyone's enjoyment for generations to come.

[4:55:00 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL stated that she would hold HB 161 in committee and keep public testimony open.

[4:55:53 PM](#)

At ease from 4:55 to 4:56 p.m.

[4:57:09 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:57 p.m.