

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 6, 2016

1:20 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Benjamin Nageak, Co-Chair  
Representative David Talerico, Co-Chair  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Kurt Olson  
Representative Paul Seaton  
Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Geran Tarr  
Representative Mike Chenault (alternate)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Mike Hawker, Vice Chair  
Representative Bob Herron

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION(S):

Big Game Commercial Services Board

Nicholas Jackson - Gulkana

Board of Game

Guy Trimmingham - Hope  
Nathan Turner - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

NICHOLAS JACKSON, Appointee  
Big Game Commercial Services Board  
Gulkana, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

DICK ROHRER

Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

SAM ROHRER, President

Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA)

Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

KAREN LINNELL, Executive Director

Copper River-Ahtna Intertribal Resource Conservation District

Glennallen, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

MICHELLE ANDERSON, President

Ahtna, Incorporated

Glennallen, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

JOE KLUTSCH

King Salmon, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

KELLY VREM

Sutton, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

AARON BLOOMQUIST

Tok, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

ROBERT FITHIAN

Lower Tonsina, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nicholas Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

GUY TRIMMINGHAM, Appointee

Board of Game (BOG)

Hope, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the BOG.

ROD ARNO, Executive Director  
Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC)  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to the appointment of Guy Trimmingham to the Board of Game (BOG).

NATHAN TURNER, Appointee  
Board of Game (BOG)  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the BOG.

DICK ROHRER  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

SAM ROHRER, President  
Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA)  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

JASON BUNCH  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

THOMAS KEEFE LAMAL  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR, Chairman  
Fish and Game Advisory Committee  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

MICHELLE ANDERSON, President  
Ahtna, Incorporated  
Glennallen, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

KAREN LINNELL, Executive Director

Ahtna Inter Tribal Resource Commission (AITRC)  
Glennallen, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-  
appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

JOE KLUTSCH  
King Salmon, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-  
appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

ROD ARNO, Executive Director  
Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC)  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to the re-  
appointment of Nathan Turner to the Board of Game (BOG).

LYLE BECKER  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-  
appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

ROBERT FITHIAN  
Lower Tonsina, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-  
appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

KELLY VREM, Registered Guide  
Sutton, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-  
appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

RICHARD PERSON, Chair  
South Central Chapter  
Alaska Trappers Association  
Chugiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-  
appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

ROB STONE, Attorney  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Nathan Turner's  
re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

MIKE MCCRARY  
Chugiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Nathan Turner's  
re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

AARON BLOOMQUIST

Tok, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

BIRCH YUKNIS

Matanuska-Susitna Advisory Committee

Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director

Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK)

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

MARY SATTLER, Lobbyist

Alaska Regional Coalition

Bethel, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

BENJAMIN MALLOTT, Vice President

Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN)

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG).

## **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:20:34 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR DAVID TALERICO** called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:20 p.m. Representatives Seaton, Josephson, Tarr, Olson, Nageak, and Talerico were present at the call to order. Representatives Johnson and Chenault (alternate) arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**CONFIRMATION(S):**  
**Big Game Commercial Services Board**  
**Board of Game**

CO-CHAIR TALERICO announced that the only order of business would be the confirmation hearing for Nicholas Jackson,

appointee to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and Nathan Turner and Guy Trimmingham, appointees to the Board of Game (BOG). He said the first appointment consideration would be Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

[1:22:26 PM](#)

NICHOLAS JACKSON, Appointee, Big Game Commercial Services Board, stated he was born and raised in Copper Center and now resides in Gulkana where he has raised four children. Alaska has remained his constant home, other than his stint Outside in the military; 1958-64, he reported and reviewed his work history, which includes 10 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and 25 years with Ahtna, Incorporated, as a finance and construction manager. Other notable services, he said, include State Chairman of RurAL CAP [Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.]; member of the Advisory Board for ADF&G; and two terms as President of Ahtna, Inc. Board of Directors.

CO-CHAIR TALERICO thanked Mr. Jackson for his interest to serve on the board, and expressed the committee's appreciation for his military service.

[1:24:41 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR NAGEAK stated he has known Mr. Jackson for a long time, as well as served with on the Board of Game (BOG).

[1:25:21 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO opened public testimony on Mr. Jackson's appointment to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

[1:25:55 PM](#)

DICK ROHRER, stated support for the confirmation of Mr. Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and said, although he is not personally acquainted with the candidate, he trusts the opinion and recommend that he has heard from outgoing board member Brenda Rebne.

[1:27:12 PM](#)

SAM ROHRER, President, Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), stated official support for the confirmation of Mr. Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and said the candidate will bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to the

board. He referred to Mr. Jackson's resume to underscore the candidate's qualifications. Further, the candidate is highly respected and recommended by the outgoing board member, Brenda Rebne, he said.

[1:28:38 PM](#)

KAREN LINNEL, Executive Director, Copper River-Ahtna Intertribal Resource Conservation District, stated official support for the confirmation of Mr. Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and explained the scope of her organization, which includes eight tribes associated with the Copper River watershed area, as well as two Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act corporations. The purpose of the organization is to support traditional stewardship of the land and includes habitat improvement projects. She said she and Mr. Jackson have been acquainted for a long time and have served together on various boards, where she found him to be fair, objective, and willing to dedicate time to thoroughly research the issues. She urged the committee to confirm the appointee.

[1:30:16 PM](#)

MICHELLE ANDERSON, President, Ahtna, Incorporated, stated official support for the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and echoed the sentiments of the previous speakers regarding his qualifications. His executive land management experience brings an additional depth of understanding, she said, and pointed out that he is also adept at comprehending financial statements and situations, as well as being skilled at networking. All of these capacities will be of great benefit to the board, she opined.

[1:32:29 PM](#)

JOE KLUTSCH stated support for the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, and said the appointees' credentials contain what is needed, especially historical knowledge and abilities that will be applicable to the board's working.

[1:33:52 PM](#)

KELLY VREM stated support for the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and said he couldn't be more pleased to recommend the appointee. Mr. Jackson's reputation is well known and well regarded, he said.

[1:35:11 PM](#)

AARON BLOOMQUIST stated support for the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and said he is familiar with the appointees reputation and accomplishments from his tenure with Ahtna, Incorporated. He credited Mr. Jackson's leadership as the reason that the Ahtna Board has become a forward thinking corporation in the areas of access, use, and conservation.

[1:36:20 PM](#)

ROBERT FITHIAN, stated support for the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board citing a 20 year acquaintance with the candidate relating back to the initial days of the board. He echoed the sentiments of the previous speakers, regarding the contributions and experience that Mr. Jackson will contribute, and urged the committee to support the confirmation.

[1:37:29 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO closed public testimony on the appointment of Mr. Jackson to the Big Game Commercial Services Board.

[1:38:28 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO said the committee would next consider the appointments of Guy Trimmingham and Nathan Turner to the Board of Game.

[1:38:48 PM](#)

GUY TRIMMINGHAM, Appointee, Board of Game (BOG), introduced himself as a lifelong resident of Hope, and a 40 year Prudhoe Bay worker currently employed by British Petroleum. Holding no affiliations, he said he believes he will be able to equally serve consumptive and non-consumptive users. He described himself as a family man, now with grandchildren, and a long time, licensed, master guide. Guiding expeditions have taken him through the majority of the mountain ranges of the state, he said, and added that he looks forward to serving on the BOG.

[1:40:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR questioned the candidate's opening comment stating his interest to represent the views of both consumptive and non-consumptive users. She said, "That's been one of the points of contention as far as the membership goes." Drawing from his experience as a guide, she asked how he envisions the balance working out.

MR. TRIMMINGHAM cited the importance of tourism dollars to Alaska and the unique aircraft orientation that exists. Having game resources is critical to maintain good tourism, and it is as important to be able to have roadside viewing as much as fly-in or pack-in opportunities; many of which now focus on eco-tourism versus the hunting industry. He said this is an avenue that definitely needs to be fostered.

[1:42:54 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO opened public testimony on Mr. Trimmingham's appointment to the Board of Game.

[1:43:52 PM](#)

ROD ARNO, Executive Director, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), stated official opposition to the appointment of Guy Trimmingham to the Board of Game (BOG), opined that the BOG should be seated by members who have risen through the advisory committee process, and already have a history of bringing issues before the board. The candidate stated in his confirmation hearing before the Senate Resources Committee, that he has never attended a BOG meeting. Additionally, the AOC finds the board to be over weighted by the seating of commercial users.

[1:46:22 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO, noting no further witnesses to testify, closed public testimony on the appointment of Mr. Trimmingham to the BOG.

[1:46:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR questioned the accuracy of the "no" response on the application section regarding conflict of interest, which asked whether the applicant is willing to provide full financial disclosure information data under AS 39.50.010.

[1:47:07 PM](#)

MR. TRIMMINGHAM responded that the "no" indication represents an error he made while completing the form. He assured the committee that he is willing to comply with the statutory request.

1:47:50 PM

NATHAN TURNER, Appointee, Board of Game (BOG), provided a brief biography, directing attention to the committee packet he summarize from the prepared statement provided, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I was born and raised on a dairy farm in upstate New York. From an early age I learned the values and benefits of living a life close to the land, and especially the risk, hard work, and rewards that result from being dependent on the natural resources for your livelihood. I am grateful for those early years on the farm, and the important lessons that this type of life had to offer.

In 1989, at age 17, my father and I headed for Alaska with two pick-ups loaded with the essentials, the result of his lifelong dream of trapping in the Far North, and also a timely advertisement in Fur-Fish-and Game magazine; Trapline For Sale in Alaska. It took us 6 days to reach Alaska, and 10 additional days were spent on the road system in the Interior, preparing for our first winter on the Kantishna River. The trapline we purchased had been unused for the previous 12 years, but had been started in 1926, and few but the old timers in the country even knew where it was at that time since the rivers of the Interior had largely grown quiet by then. We were dropped off by a local bush pilot from Nenana in mid-September, and for the next ten months we learned a lot about Alaska. The winter of 1989 and 1990 was record breaking for the deep cold spells and snowfall - every winter has been an easy one since!

The next year one of my brothers joined us, we began in earnest to build our traplines in something that we hoped could support our family for the years to come. We started with the idea to treat trapping as though it were a business, working 6 days a week, with our cut-off period for trapping being 40 below. Three years later we started an additional trapline 85 miles

to the west in the Nowitna country and during the next 23 years we have cleared over two hundred miles of trapline trails for our dog teams and sno-gos, operated subsistence and test fishwheels (for both Fish and Game and the National Park Service), annually grew large gardens for our winter needs, built log homes and cabins for hire in the bush, and seasonally guided big game hunters.

When we first arrived in the country, we were often told that the days of life on the trapline were gone; that this way of life wasn't possible anymore in Alaska. Thankfully, we found that those opinions were wrong. The country hadn't changed and the economics of the life hadn't changed so much as the spirit of the people seemed to have. We found that optimism, faith that our efforts would pay off in the end, hard work, and room to grown has enabled us to live a rich and rewarding life directly from the resources the country provides. Alaska has been generous to us, and the "old ways" are still there waiting for the next generation to arrive and take up the life again.

In 1996 I started working as an assistant hunting guide in the Nowitna drainages for the neighboring trapper who had a small guiding operation. We worked together for 6 years, guiding hunters in our adjoining trapping areas, before I started contracting clients on my own in 2002. Since then, I have been fortunate to share this guiding opportunity with other neighbors in my part of the Interior - nearly all of us currently live and trap close to the areas we hunt in. We have been able to meet our annual subsistence needs, while being paid to do so, much like the trapline. The harvested meat is shared among our families, and with less successful neighbors in the region. These packing and guiding jobs are the only means of employment for most of us, other than trapping.

For 15 seasons I also worked as an assistant guide for [hunting] Dall sheep in the Northern Brooks Range, and for Brown Bear out of Cold Bay on the Alaska Peninsula. In spite of having my own guiding business, I continued to work as an assistant guide on these hunts for many years since it allowed for me to annually visit these remote parts of the State, which

have become very important to me, and also to simply be 'a guide' and share in the daily adventure with the hunters as the experience unfolds. Since this time, I no longer work as an assistant guide, but do continue to provide hunts for coastal Brown bear on the Alaska Peninsula, Moose and grizzly in the northern and western interior, and intend to continue guiding in the Arctic if future opportunity allows.

[1:54:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON asked for elaboration on use of the term "[grown] quiet."

MR. TURNER explained that not many people are choosing to pursue the remote, subsistence, trapper lifestyle, leaving the area quiet to a once dominant and prolific way of life.

[1:55:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON directed attention to Mr. Turner's application and his statement reading, "[I] am the only Registered or Master hunting guide to serve on this board since March 2006." A perception exists that the board is comprised of an abundance of commercial guides, he noted, and asked for clarification regarding the delineation between guide classifications.

MR. TURNER answered that a registered hunting guide has the ability to market and contract for hunting opportunities, and assumes the ultimate responsibility for the participants and any employees throughout the hunt. The assistant guide provides aide to the registered guide, without the same responsibility level; however, the success of the hunt may reside primarily with the assistant carrying out the ground work. The assistant guide has a gun and a backpack, leading the clients, and the registered guide ensures the legality and safety of the hunt, he summarized.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON related that he has received an email from someone criticizing Mr. Turner's ethics as being too extreme, and asked for clarification.

[1:57:49 PM](#)

MR. TURNER replied that he is not familiar with the comment or what it may refer to specifically. He said he would take it as

a compliment not a complaint, and pointed out that his livelihood is directly dependent on his ability to harvest wildlife. This dependency makes him unique among the BOG members. His years of involvement as a professional trapper and guide, have only heightened the strong sense of ethics that he was raised with, he said, and stressed the importance for professionals to maintain the highest standards of performance, as well as to hold the law in high regard. A sense of ethics is something for which he holds strong convictions, he underscored that ethical professionalism extends to sustaining these highest standards as they relate to fair chase, respect for the animals, and full utilization and care of the meat.

[1:59:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR shared that a number of the opposing responses have held a common theme of concern that his board positions reflect the commercial interests of the guide industry over resident interests. Specifically mentioned is Proposition 51, limiting guides competition from residents, in which he demonstrated allegiance to the industry, she said, and asked for comment.

[2:00:15 PM](#)

MR. TURNER replied that, since the passage of Proposition 51, a higher level of anxiety has been expressed than what initially arose during the board's consideration of the proposal. Regarding his role, he said he does not view his position on the board as being that of an advocate for the guiding industry, but rather for promoting the preservation of traditional hunting opportunities for everyone, with the same level of importance. Residents have provided a clear voice of appreciation for accomplishments he has attained, he said, particularly for preserving historic ways of life and traditional values held in Alaska. Game hunting is a highly regulated industry and requires insights into all the working pieces, he elaborated, which is what he tries to impart on the other board members for their benefit in making decisions. He said his efforts are primarily to preserve and ensure a viable resource for the future. Proposal 51 was presented to the board by the Professional Hunters Association and contained a particularly confusing portion. Lacking an understanding of the intent for that portion, the board chose to remove it, which in hindsight may not have been optimal, he said, and predicted that the proposal will be resubmitted. Addressing the point of second degree, kindred issues, he said, it's been a common topic before

the board for the last decade. It revolves around limited permit opportunities that are highly coveted by non-residents. The permits are being passed to second degree kindred, which has disrupted the original intent of the allocation structure set forth by the board. He pointed out that other board members may have a different opinion on what is causing the angst regarding this topic.

[2:04:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR said another issue relates to Dall sheep management and that the board is perceived to favor the professional guide industry over the interests of the residents.

[2:04:54 PM](#)

MR. TURNER said there are 41 members in the sheep working group that is setup by the board to work through the advisory committee system. He pointed out that the topic of Dall sheep management tends to draw the best and worst out of people, as it represents a contentious issue. The board is working towards the goal of achieving maximum opportunities for Alaskan voices to be heard. With that in mind, every avenue was pursued to hear from non-government organizations, consumptive and non-consumptive members of the public, and any other interested parties that chose to express their opinion. He stated his belief that the process was not dominated by the voices of guides.

[2:07:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON asked for verification that there was a significant number of guides, servicing non-residents, who opposed Proposition 207.

[2:07:26 PM](#)

MR. TURNER answered yes, about 50 percent of the guides opposed the proposal.

[2:07:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR recalled the possibility that Proposition 51 may be brought back before the board, and said a continuing sentiment exists that the board supports the guide industry over resident interests. She asked how he, as a re-appointment to a

leadership position on the board, anticipates moving forward on these issues in a positive direction.

2:09:09 PM

MR. TURNER replied that he gained an understanding of the omitted portion, after the meeting was adjourned. He said he would look forward to having it brought back for further consideration. In moving forward, he suggested that there is always more behind a story than is immediately apparent and he expects honesty can be brought to the arguments by identifying and bringing forward points that have not yet been laid on the table. Many arguments may not be honest, he opined, and said it it's not necessary to malign anyone. Resolving the competitions between the various aspects of the industry may be beyond the scope of the BOG. However, a transparent, honest approach throughout the board process should ally the majority. As a member he strives to be approachable and available, and to demonstrate true compassion. He provided an anecdote of a recent working group that was formed to address a specific complaint, how it maintained a transparent process, ensured that everyone was heard, and resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

2:13:12 PM

REPRESENTATIVE TARR referred to the competition between the two aspects of the guiding industry; the transporters and the guides. Although not limited in a legal sense, there is a de facto limitation practiced because some of the transporters will not bring residents into areas which are unofficially reserved for commercial guiding.

2:13:45 PM

MR. TURNER acknowledged being aware of the de facto claim; however, there are many excellent transporters in the state who ensure that residents are able to access areas that otherwise could not be hunted. Ethical standards and responsibilities are required of registered transporters. The competition he was referring to pertains to a minority of the air taxi transporters who would like to see the guiding industry go away. These opponents may not say outright that they would like the guiding industry to go away, but it's in their best commercial interest to see it dissolved.

2:15:26 PM

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON asked for clarification on the final vote taken on Proposition 207.

[2:15:36 PM](#)

MR. TURNER responded that the vote changed, as there were a record number of board hearings on the proposal. He recalled that the final vote was 4-3.

[2:16:07 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO asked for clarity regarding Mr. Turner's position and approach on the Denali National Park and Preserve buffer zone.

[2:16:43 PM](#)

MR. TURNER related that false rumors of his stance and voting history have been circulated; however, the buffer zone issue has not come up while he has been on the board, thus he has no comment or vote on record. The question that did arise had to do with scheduling the topic on the board's agenda. The board meetings have been altered from a three to a two year cycle, which required reconsideration of the original timeline for the issue to be heard. Mr. Turner offered that placing the BOG meetings on a two year cycle has not been an improvement but rather become detrimental in many ways and particularly to the public process.

[2:19:03 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO opened public testimony.

[2:19:21 PM](#)

DICK ROHRER stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said that, through his regular attendance at board meetings, he is well acquainted with the appointee. Two words characterize Mr. Turner, he opined: ethics and integrity. During the recent BOG meeting, he reported, Mr. Turner was personally attacked by several witnesses, however, his response to them remained respectful and he thanked them for their testimony. He has been a great asset to the board, he maintained, and urged confirmation.

[2:21:33 PM](#)

SAM ROHRER, President, Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), stated official support for Nathan Turner to be reappointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and paraphrasing from a prepared statement he spoke as follows:

The APHA strongly supports the re-appointment of Nate Turner to the Board of Game (BOG). To be a good BOG member one needs to approach each proposal and the board process with an open mind. You need to carefully consider the long and short term implications of each board action and you need to listen and carefully consider all of the public testimony. That is the type of board member Mr. Turner is. Mr. Turner's fair minded, he asks questions of all the testifiers in an effort to gain knowledge of specific issues, and he truly cares about the resource and about all the resource users. Mr. Turner's wide range of experience, as a trapper, subsistence user, and hunting guide provides him with the ability to understand how decisions the board makes affects the users in the field. This knowledge is invaluable.

One of the things that I particularly appreciate about Mr. Turner is that he doesn't always vote the way I would prefer he vote, and he doesn't always vote in favor of my associations' proposals. This might surprise some of you that I would appreciate a board member not voting the way I would like them to vote. But it goes to show an important character trait of Mr. Turner. Mr. Turner is beholding to no individual user group or association. In fact, to the best that I can see, he is only beholding to two things: the long term sustainability of our wildlife resources; and to all Alaskans in general. This is as it should be.

Lastly, I want to briefly address what is currently one of the biggest threats to resource users in Alaska and the hunting way of life: federal overreach. Mr. Turner has been at the forefront of the effort to combat this, both in his professional life as a hunting guide and a refuge special use permit holder, and in his capacity as a BOG member. In fact, Mr. Turner probably has more experience dealing with federal issues than any other current BOG member. The federal government, through the Parks Service, Fish

and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management is constantly trying to erode state authority on matters related to wildlife management. The BOG is unquestionably at the forefront of the fight to push back against this type of federal overreach. With Mr. Turner's experience with these issues, he's undoubtedly the right person for this job. It is primarily for this reason that the APHA strongly supports Mr. Turner's re-appointment to the BOG.

Lastly, just as a side note, I wanted to mention that through some of the e-mails you've hear in opposition to Nate, there's been some fairly strong accusations of the guiding industries too close ties to Nate. Or the APHA's too close of ties to Mr. Turner. I would love to have the opportunity to answer any questions of the committee if there are some of you who feel this may be the case.

[2:24:57 PM](#)

JASON BUNCH stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG). As a member of the Kodiak advisory committee, he said he has firsthand observations of the appointee, and reported that Mr. Turner demonstrates good leadership skills, is attentive, and consistently unbiased and thoughtful in his responses. Additionally, he is representative of a good steward of Alaskan resources, he opined.

[2:26:05 PM](#)

THOMAS KEEFE LAMAL stated opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG), and paraphrasing from a prepared statement he spoke as follows:

Running for these boards and commissions is a difficult task, because of all the negative conversation that comes to light on the candidates. Some is true, some is speculation. Your constituents voted you into office because they felt you would confirm the best candidates to protect the rights of Alaska residents and keep the boards balance with diversity. The Board of Game (BOG) is a perfect example of your ignoring the request of the public and succumbing to the requests of lobbyists and commercial operators. The BOG is incredibly unbalanced and it

has been for years. It is shameful, and residents of other states can't believe how you treat your fellow Alaskans. Please look at how other western states allocate their resources to their residents. For years the BOG has been referred to as the "Board of Guides." I'm not going to go into unpleasant politics, but Nate Turner is a guide and Alaska does not need another guide on the BOG. Both candidates, for the BOG this year, are guides and, if both are confirmed, there will be three guides on the board, one person from a guiding family, and a chair that totally supports the guides over the residents. Who is responsible for this situation? You need to talk to the people on the street; the ones that elected you and understand main stream sentiment. I have seen many letters written to Governor Walker, state senators, and state legislators, requesting a balanced BOG where residents will have some representation. You can't keep confirming people that make a living off BOG decisions. I am requesting that you don't confirm Nate Turner. I think there should be one guide on the BOG, not three or four. These decisions should be made with Alaska residents as your number one priority.

[2:28:17 PM](#)

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR, Chairman, Fish and Game Advisory Committee, stated official support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said a good board member must bear three things in mind, which are: 1) the constitutional mandate of sustained yield; 2) conservation of the resources; and 3) development of the resources. It's important to be fair, honest, and open to the public, he said, which Mr. Turner has demonstrated in his past service. There's been controversy over some recent proposals and, regardless of how you vote as a board member, one side is going to be happy and one will be unhappy. The most vocal will be heard. Mr. Turner is doing a very good job, he opined and urged his confirmation.

[2:30:43 PM](#)

MICHELLE ANDERSON, President, Ahtna Incorporated, stated official support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said she is a regular attendee at the board meetings. She pointed out the power and position that the BOF holds in the critical decisions that must be made and the

effect those decisions have on many people who depend on game as a primary food source. Mr. Turner makes ethical decisions, based on experience, in a respectful and responsible manner, extending beyond his human interactions to include the animals he harvests and the land he hunts. In her observations, she said he is rational, calm, well conducted, and ready to hear others express their opinions prior to deciding his own mind. She invited the BOG and the House Resources Standing Committee members to visit Game Units 11, 12, and 13, during hunting season, to view firsthand the adverse impacts that the BOG decisions have on the area.

2:34:06 PM

KAREN LINNEL, Executive Director, Ahtna Inter Tribal Resource Commission (AITRC), stated official support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG). The commission was formed to be the coordinating body for subsistence resources in the Ahtna traditional use area, comprising eight tribes and two Native corporations. The AITRC fully supports the retention of Mr. Turner as he provides a balanced and rational voice on the board, listens to all sides, does his research on issues, and makes informed decisions. Representing subsistence users, the AITRC finds Mr. Turner to be fair and unbiased regarding the guiding industry and balancing what is best for the resource. She reported having attended the BOG meetings on a regular basis and observed first hand his ability to handle difficult situations. Further, he chaired the community working group, which she sat on, and found him to be very fair and equitable. Multiple sheep proposals have come through, she reported, and more study may be necessary to come to a decision that will best serve the resource.

2:37:58 PM

JOE KLUTSCH stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said the qualities he is familiar with in the appointee include: integrity, honesty, fairness, and possessing an unbiased opinion. The welfare of the resource is what comes first, he underscored, and Mr. Turner has that interest at heart. The issue at hand appears to be the methods and means of airplane use, he opined, and said the fair chase/same day aircraft use concern has been ironed out to the benefit of all users. He maintained that much of the negativity is being generated by hunters who want to use aircraft to spot animals and pursue via air chase, which is not considered a fair chase method. Mr. Turner is a good man, he finished.

2:41:09 PM

ROD ARNO, Executive Director, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), stated official opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG), and reported AOC as having about 10,000 resident members. He said that the board has reached a contentious level, among Alaskan resident hunters, that has not been seen before. The federal land managers are imposing restrictions which favor subsistence hunters and minimizes the areas available for other residents. The council would like to see a more balanced board with representation from "folks who have come up through the advisory committee process in non-subsistence areas," he stressed.

2:43:00 PM

LYLE BECKER stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG). He described himself as an active trapper in Game Unit 19, and previously in Game Unit 7. Despite the rich history of trapping in Alaska, finding someone with the depth of understanding that Mr. Turner holds on the topic is uncommon, he opined. People without a connection to the woods and the realities of trapping have an unrealistic approach when imposing management restrictions. He suggested that anyone would find it enlightening to listen to a random sampling of testimony at any of the BOG meeting, to hear which board member asks thoughtful, intentional questions. He maintained it will likely be Mr. Turner requesting clarity and elaboration on a given topic. Many of the questions Mr. Turner asks are deliberately designed to draw out additional information and to ensure that the witness is fully heard. Finally, he said, "Nate is pretty sharp for a Bush Rat." For someone who spends the majority of his time in the Bush, Mr. Turner is thoughtful and articulate which, he underscored, is unusual for a Bush Rat.

2:46:16 PM

ROBERT FITHIAN stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG). He described his background as serving both federally and within the state in various conservation fields. He said:

Please know that the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) process represents the most democratic process of wildlife conservation that exists anywhere in the world. I can safely assure you of that. ...

I've known Mr. Turner and his family for many years and have watched him closely as he's dedicated much of his life to the BOG process. I find him to be a most respectful and respected Alaskan. One who's lived close to what many of us hold dear regarding our wildlife and wild lands.

His advocacy from the BOG to address usurping the state authority by the federal land agencies is resilient and strong. This situation represents one of our greatest conservation challenges, and he's often lead the way in communications with the AG's (attorney general's) office to find and promote our strengths. Nate is not a party line person. He believes and thinks with the best interest of the whole, and respectfully considers and communicates with people or groups who do not believe in our constitutional mandates of wildlife conservation. He is a good communicator, he takes the time to make sure that the board process does not leave a board member, or a public member, misunderstanding the concern, or process, or actions. He does not march to the drum of certain special interest groups who, in my opinion, do not represent the best interest of the whole for Alaska.

He stands strong on fair chase and high ethical standards of hunting, which I and many others believe represents one of the most critical aspects of protecting our future hunting opportunities.

We're very fortunate, as a state, to have balanced people of integrity donating their time and lives to Alaska's best interest and Mr. Turner is no exception to this. A non-confirmation of this man, I believe, would be a blemish on the integrity of the board process and on our state as a whole. I strongly encourage his continuation within the board process.

[2:49:06 PM](#)

KELLY VREM, Registered Guide, stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG). Mr. Turner is his own man and not swayed by special interest groups, he said. Despite being a guide, he hasn't always voted in the best interests of the guiding industry. Mr. Turner's integrity is

beyond reproach, he opined. The negative comments are at high levels, but naysayers often want to reserve the sole right to decide what is best. Mr. Turner holds the interests of the natural resources of Alaska "in his heart."

2:50:24 PM

RICHARD PERSON, Chair, South Central Chapter, Alaska Trappers Association, stated official support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said he appreciates the representation that the appointee brings to the board as a trapper, as well as the lifestyle that he lives. It's significant and important to have someone serving whose life is integral to the wildlife being managed. Mr. Turner is reasonable and fair minded, he said, and urged confirmation.

2:51:55 PM

ROB STONE, Attorney, stated opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG). He described himself as a second generation pilot and a founding member of the Resident Hunters of Alaska group. He voiced opposition for three reasons: 1) the BOG is too heavily weighted with commercial interests; 2) an ethics complaint has been filed against the appointee; and 3) Mr. Turner is a staunch supporter of Proposition 207. Elaborating on the third point, he explained, that Proposition 207 "keeps resident pilots, out of the mountains, competing with guides like Mr. Turner." Most alarming, he stressed, is Mr. Turner's disregard for input from the public. The supporters have stated that he listens to the public and holds no special interest biases; however, Proposition 207 was created behind closed doors in collaboration with a small interest group. This measure is best described as an anti-pilot, anti-resident proposition, he opined. Once this proposition was passed, the overwhelming public testimony opposing the measure was ignored, he explained and named the various organizations who submitted oppositional statements to the board, which included: the Alaska Airmen, many advisory councils, the Alaska Professional Hunters Association, many air carriers, and the Bow Hunters Association. The Alaska State Troopers deemed that the proposition would be unenforceable. The merits of Proposition 207 are no longer the concern, but rather that Mr. Turner disregarded the overwhelming opposition presented by the public and used a closed-door meeting to craft the policy. He reported that, sitting as a member of the 41 member working sheep group, there was a common lack of trust regarding the BOG because of its disregard for public input, as

demonstrated through the handling of Proposition 207. He maintained that Mr. Turner has lost the trust of Alaskans and urged the committee to deny his re-appointment.

[2:55:39 PM](#)

MIKE MCCRARY stated opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG) for the same reasons that Mr. Lamal and Mr. Arno have described, and added that Mr. Turner displays a clear lack of recognition for the financial interest he personally holds regarding harvesting of wildlife. Mr. Turner considers himself to be entitled to earn his living off of the public resource and treats the guiding industry similar to subsistence, which is a bona fide entitlement. The guiding industry receives protections from Mr. Turner's board activities. Finally, he opined, there is too much commercial representation on the board, and he urged that the committee oppose the re-appointment.

[2:58:38 PM](#)

AARON BLOOMQUIST stated support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG). As a regular attendee at the BOG meetings, he reported that he has brought many proposals before the board to which Mr. Turner has been a primary vote of opposition. Despite Mr. Turner's lack of support for his proposals, he said, "I've always felt like I've gotten a fair shake." He urged members to grant the confirmation and said much of the opposition is isolated to a few who have gone so far as to file false ethics claims against Mr. Turner.

[3:01:05 PM](#)

BIRCH YUKNIS, Matanuska-Susitna Advisory Committee, stated official and personal opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG). On behalf of the committee he said it voted unanimously against the re-appointment of Nathan Turner, at their regular meeting on March 2, 2016. Mr. Turner's support of Proposition 207 was cited as the major stimulus for the opposition. In supporting the proposal, Mr. Turner ignored the vociferous, statewide, oppositional response generated by the public. Speaking personally, he opined that Mr. Turner is looking out for his own agenda and not the best interest of the state residents. The sheep working group would not be necessary if the board incorporated the advice of the advisory committees and the

public. The big game guides are the supporters behind the re-appointment, but not the public, he maintained.

[3:03:R12 PM](#)

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director, Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK), stated official opposition to Nathan Turner's re-appointment to the Board of Game (BOG), and paraphrased from a written statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

We want to make clear that we believe there is nothing wrong with having a guide sit on the Board of Game (BOG). Or someone with a guiding background. Guides and those with a guiding background have a valuable perspective and experience to share. There is also absolutely nothing wrong if a guide member of the Board of Game should have a conflict with certain proposals before the Board. That is why we have ethics disclosures and rules about conflict of interest. But a guide like Mr. Turner who also books hunts for other guides and whose booking services include nearly all big game species creates a negative set of circumstances whereby most of the proposals that come before the Board more than likely will create a conflicted environment. The problem that we have with Mr. Turner is that he has not been forthcoming about his guiding and hunt booking activities in his ethics disclosures and he has been allowed to deliberate and vote on proposals before the Board that clearly have a financial benefit or loss to him.

RHAK filed an ethics complaint against Mr. Turner at the start of the Statewide 2016 BOG meeting in Fairbanks last month. Our goal was to point out these facts in the hope that Mr. Turner would recuse himself from deliberating and voting on the numerous statewide sheep proposals before the Board asking, among other things, to limit all nonresident sheep hunters to draw only hunts with a set allocation level. He was also falsely claiming that he held exclusive guiding rights in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Mr. Turner was also involved as a member of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), with APHA's Non-Resident Hunting Preservation Fund. Mr. Turner advertised that program on his website and his clients

pay into that program to preserve their non-resident hunting opportunities. After the complaint APHA has taken that page down from their website.

We brought these issues before the Board, with the intention that Mr. Turner would disclose these issues and recuse himself from deliberating and voting on the number of proposals before the Board seeking to limit or restrict non-resident guided sheep hunting opportunities. Instead of doing so, however, Mr. Turner responded to the complaint by basically saying nothing on his website was true because it was old information that hadn't been updated. He doesn't really sell Dall sheep hunts for \$17,500 for the 2016 season, as his website states. He doesn't hold exclusive guiding rights in the Arctic refuge, as his website claims. He isn't being compensated for acting as a hunt booker for other guides. And other guide members of the APHA are also involved with the non-resident hunting preservation fund. The kicker, however, in Mr. Turner's response on the record about his website, was when he said he did not feel it was inappropriate for his website to still be up and to claim all this information.

Mr. Turner was allowed to deliberate and vote on the sheep proposals before the Board, two weeks ago, after nearly a decade of the public asking the Board to limit non-resident guided sheep hunters who are taking 60-80 percent of our sheep in some areas. The Board really only took action on, and passed, two proposals from the APHA that limited non-resident next of kin hunters and the Alaskan resident relatives who take them hunting. Unbelievably, Mr. Turner helped pass an APHA proposal that forces resident Alaskan hunters, who take a relative hunting for a must be guided species to punch their tag if an animal is harvested. So now if, for example, I want to bring my non-resident brother up here to hunt sheep with me, we both don't have an opportunity to harvest a sheep, only one of us can harvest a sheep.

It appears that commercial guiding interests are having an unfair influence on the BOG. Mr. Turner is a primary example of that influence. His guiding and hunt booking activities and affiliation with the fund

to preserve non-resident hunting opportunities have never been disclosed, as they should have been.

We hope members of this committee and other members of the legislature will weigh this information carefully before you vote to confirm Mr. Turner and we ask that you oppose his re-appointment.

[3:07:59 PM](#)

MARY SATTLER, Lobbyist, stated official support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said the Alaska Regional Coalition, for whom she speaks, is comprised of five regions hosting 100 tribes. Mr. Turner hears all opinion, does his homework, and does not favor any one segment of Alaska or Alaskans, she offered. Further, he is fair and open minded, and excellent in all aspects. Public policy can be very contentious, she acknowledged, when it includes finite resource allocation, and passion is often a factor when lobbying issues before the board. However, Mr. Turner puts forth an excellent effort to make the best decision possible for all Alaskans. The Bethel Native Corporation has also added their voice of support, she said and offered to make their written comments available to the committee.

[3:10:05 PM](#)

BENJAMIN MALLOTT, Vice President, Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), stated official support for Nathan Turner to be re-appointed to the Board of Game (BOG), and said AFN is comprised of 183 tribes, representing more than 120,000 Alaskan Natives. On behalf of AFN he urged the re-appointment of Mr. Turner as a competent, rational, and highly effective board member. He added that AFN also supports the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson to the Big Game and Commercial Services Board.

CO-CHAIR TALERICO closed public testimony on the appointments of Mr. Trimmingham and Mr. Turner to the Board of Game.

[3:11:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TALERICO reminded members that the hearing process is to vet the nominees for these positions. 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.

3:12:23 PM

CO-CHAIR NAGEAK moved to advance the confirmation of Nicholas Jackson, appointee to the Big Game Services Board, and Guy Trimmingham and Nathan Turner, appointees to the Board of Game, to a joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmations were advanced.

3:13:06 PM

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.