

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 29, 2016

3:33 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator Mia Costello, Vice Chair
Senator John Coghill
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Bill Stoltze
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Bert Stedman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 170

"An Act authorizing the Department of Natural Resources, division of geological and geophysical surveys, to collect fees for facilities, equipment, products, and services; relating to accounting for certain program receipts; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 170(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 137(FIN) AM

"An Act raising certain fees related to sport fishing, hunting, and trapping; relating to the fish and game fund; providing for the repeal of the sport fishing surcharge and sport fishing facility revenue bonds; replacing the permanent sport fishing, hunting, or trapping identification card for certain residents with an identification card valid for three years; relating to hunting and fishing by proxy; relating to fish and game conservation decals; raising the age of eligibility for a sport fishing, hunting, or trapping license exemption for state residents; raising the age at which a state resident is required to obtain a license for sport fishing, hunting, or trapping; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 170

SHORT TITLE: DNR FEES FOR GEOLOGICAL SERVICES

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GIESSEL

02/05/16 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/05/16 (S) RES, FIN
02/29/16 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HB 137

SHORT TITLE: HUNT/FISH/TRAP: FEES;LICENSES;EXEMPTIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TALERICO

03/06/15 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/06/15 (H) RES, FIN
03/20/15 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/20/15 (H) Heard & Held
03/20/15 (H) MINUTE(RES)
03/25/15 (H) RES AT 6:00 PM BARNES 124
03/25/15 (H) Moved CSHB 137(RES) Out of Committee
03/25/15 (H) MINUTE(RES)
03/27/15 (H) RES RPT CS(RES) NT 2DP 3NR 2AM
03/27/15 (H) DP: OLSON, TALERICO
03/27/15 (H) NR: HERRON, JOSEPHSON, JOHNSON
03/27/15 (H) AM: SEATON, TARR
04/07/15 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/07/15 (H) Heard & Held
04/07/15 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
04/10/15 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/10/15 (H) Heard & Held
04/10/15 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
04/13/15 (H) FIN RPT CS(FIN) NT 5DP 5NR
04/13/15 (H) DP: PRUITT, WILSON, GATTIS, MUNOZ,
THOMPSON
04/13/15 (H) NR: SADDLER, GARA, GUTTENBERG, EDGMON,
NEUMAN
04/13/15 (H) FIN AT 9:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/13/15 (H) Moved CSHB 137(FIN) Out of Committee
04/13/15 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
04/15/15 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/15/15 (H) VERSION: CSHB 137(FIN) AM
04/15/15 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/15/15 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard
04/16/15 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/16/15 (S) RES, FIN
04/16/15 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/16/15 (S) Heard & Held

04/16/15 (S) MINUTE(RES)
04/17/15 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
04/17/15 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard
02/29/16 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

AKIS GIOLOPSOS, Staff to Senator Giessel and the Senate
Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Described SB 170.

STEVE MASTERMAN, State Geologist and Director
Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Expressed support for SB 170 and answered
questions.

MARY NANUWAK, representing herself
Bethel, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Expressed support for Native Alaskan
subsistence rights and protecting traditional lands.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO, Sponsor
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 137.

JOSHUA BANKS, Staff to Representative Talerico
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Described HB 137.

KEVIN BROOKS, Deputy Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 137 and answered
questions.

SAM COTTEN, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Expressed strong support for HB 137 and
answered questions.

BRUCE DALE, Director

Division of Wildlife Conservation
Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to HB 137.

CHARLES DERRICK, President
Chitina Dipnetters Association (CDA)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Proposed a \$15 fee to obtain a personal-use Chitina dipnet permit to raise funds for road, garbage, and toilet maintenance.

NANCY HILLSTRAND, representing herself
Kachemak Bay, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Proposed souvenir-quality permits for watching or photographing wildlife and raising the qualifying age of resident lifetime hunting/fishing licenses to 65 years.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:33:51 PM](#)

CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Wielechowski, Costello, Coghill, Micciche, and Chair Giessel.

SB 170-DNR FEES FOR GEOLOGICAL SERVICES

[3:34:11 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced consideration of SB 170 and noted that the bill is designed to make the Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey (DGGS), in the Department of Revenue (DNR), more self-sufficient, so it will rely less on general funds. A few years ago the legislature authorized DGGS to purchase a Sam's Club building in East Anchorage. Geological materials, such as core samples from oil and mineral exploration, had been stored in Conex containers in Eagle River, and they were leaking, causing sample degeneration. She stated that the material was a library of information for future explorers. The DGGS is not allowed to charge people to view the cores, which could help support the facility and the staffing. She said other states charge for this service, and SB 170 authorizes DGGS to receive payment from explorers who want to see the cores.

[3:35:05 PM](#)

SENATOR STOLTZE joined the committee.

[3:36:28 PM](#)

AKIS GIALOPSOS, Staff to Senator Giessel and the Senate Resources Committee, Alaska State Legislature, explained that Section 1 of SB 170 adds DGGS to [AS 37.05.146(c), a list of program receipts to be accounted for separately]. Section 2 changes the requirement that DGGC fees and receipts go into the general fund, he stated, and Section 3 is the heart of SB 170, allowing the DGGS to institute fee structures for services, equipment, and the use of DGGS facilities.

[3:38:35 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked about Section 2, which deletes the requirement that money from selling reports and maps will go into the general fund.

MR. GIALOPSOS said that Section 3 will allow the division to charge for equipment and services and "was going to be now accounted for in Section 1 of the bill, which is the receipt authority." He added that Section 2 would remove the reason for the fees being deposited into the general fund.

SENATOR MICCICHE asked if other departments have similar authorization to charge for services and keep the funds.

MR. GIALOPSOS answered that the authorization in SB 170 would be the "88th version of receipt authority being designated in the state's ledger book." The next witness can clarify which divisions of DNR are striving for self-sufficiency by using receipt authority, he suggested.

[3:40:15 PM](#)

STEVE MASTERMAN, State Geologist and Director, Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Fairbanks, Alaska, said that the Division of Mining, Land, and Water is transitioning from unrestricted general funds to designated general funds. He noted that the Division of Parks and Recreation is making that transition as well. The Division of Forestry is funding a certification program with industry receipts, and the Division of Agriculture has increased fees by 20 percent to fund operations by designated general funds. He said it is a business model for DNR to transition to revenues that are designated by its activities, and SB 170 would be an extension of that model.

CHAIR GIESSEL said spoke of Texas charging a fee for using a geologic materials center, which she toured, and she asked what other states do.

MR. MASTERMAN said there are 28 core depositories in the United States and Canada, and of the 10 depositories that are over 25,000 square feet in size, seven charge a fee. Alaska's GMC [geologic materials center] is 100,000 square feet, he added. Of the smaller facilities, about half charge a fee.

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CHAIR GIESSEL noted a chart Mr. Masterman provided and asked how fees are set.

MR. MASTERMAN answered that he is looking at fees from other facilities. He noted that Alaska's [proposed fees] are in the middle or lower/middle of the range. Industry has expressed concern, "and so we are very cognizant of not charging too much for these services." The facility should be successful but not drive people away, he opined.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked how industry uses the GMC.

MR. MASTERMAN explained that the inventory is online and available. Every rock in the facility has a barcode, and all are geographically referenced and can be searched by location, prospect, commodity type, or borehole name. He said that the drill samples represent over 48 million feet of drilling. There are over 330,000 surface samples and about 200,000 "thin sections" that have been donated to the state. To gather that information now would take tens of billions of dollars, so it is very valuable.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked about a letter dated on February 16 where Mr. Masterman said he would not charge for donations.

MR. MASTERMAN explained that there is no charge if people give rocks to the division.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if school groups will be charged.

MR. MASTERMAN said no. The division received money from Walmart to support educational uses, and the university does use the facility for core workshops.

[3:48:00 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI suggested putting such language in statute.

MR. MASTERMAN said that would be very appropriate. "We love to have the kids come out there."

SENATOR STOLTZE said he grew up in the area and his elementary school took him there on field trips, "and I think I'm much enriched as a result."

SENATOR COSTELLO noted that legislators thought the issue was addressed last session. She had visited the old center, which looked like something from *Samson and Sons*. She took her boys on a tour, and it is quite an educational opportunity, she stated.

SENATOR MICCICHE said he appreciates DNR covering its costs, but he referred to resistance from DNR on similar efforts.

[3:50:46 PM](#)

MARY NANUWAK, representing herself, Bethel, Alaska, said all fees should be the same for everyone except nonresidents or attorneys who will gain from it. She spoke of hunting and fishing fees for Native Alaskans who rely on subsistence, and then was reminded that the current discussion related to geologic materials. Ms. Nanuwak noted that certain Native lands are not supposed to be occupied by state agencies, including grave sites and subsistence areas.

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further comments, closed public testimony.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI suggested a conceptual amendment to allow school groups to use the GMC without a fee.

CHAIR GIESSEL suggested adding the language to Section 3.

SENATOR COSTELLO suggested it include children who are not with a formal school group, making it less preclusive.

SENATOR MICCICHE noted that the goal is to charge industry groups for access to the core samples.

MR. MASTERMAN agreed.

SENATOR STOLTZE suggested giving DNR the discretion to waive fees for educational purposes, in order that preschools and university programs, for example, have free access.

CHAIR GIESSEL proffered language such that DNR promulgate regulations to waive fees for educational opportunities.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI moved conceptual amendment [1], requiring the department to waive GMC fees for educational opportunities. There were no objections, and it was so ordered.

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SENATOR COSTELLO moved to report SB 170, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSSB 170(RES) moved from the Senate Resources Standing Committee.

At ease

HB 137-HUNT/FISH/TRAP: FEES;LICENSES;EXEMPTIONS

[3:59:45 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced consideration of HB 137. [CSHB 137(FIN) am, version 29-LS0625\S.A, was before the committee.]

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO, Alaska State Legislature, described HB 137. He said the bill raises license fees for fishing, trapping, and combination licenses "to help deal with the deficiency we currently have." It provides for a small increase in fees to residents and a more significant increase to nonresidents. HB 137 also changes the qualifying threshold for low income licenses to meet the most recent federal poverty guidelines. Currently, low income is set at a level of under \$8,200 a year.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO stated that the bill allows for a voluntary fish and game conservation decal for those who don't hunt or fish. He noted that the current surcharge on the fishing license would continue after the hatchery bonds have been paid, and that money would be available to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). The bill also changes the eligibility age for [free lifetime licenses] from 60 to 62 years, and it would need to be renewed every three years to ensure that only those who remain in the state qualify for that license. Additionally, he said, HB 137 changes the age for a license from 16 to 18 years, and it allows residents to hunt or fish on behalf of a person with a disability. He noted that it has been 17 years since nonresident fees have been raised and over 24 years for resident fees. This bill is to continue providing opportunities for Alaskans by giving the Department of Fish and Game enough money, he stated.

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REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO said he has been paying \$48 for a combination license for many years. At current inflation, it should be valued at \$124, but he does not suggest that the fee follows inflation.

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JOSHUA BANKS, Staff to Representative Talerico, Alaska State Legislature, said Section 1 of HB 137 repeals the authority to use the fish and game fund for fish hatchery bonds once the bonds are paid off. Section 2 amends the qualifying ages for special fishery openings. Section 3 raises the resident sport fishing fee from \$15 to \$20 and the fee for blind residents from \$0.25 to \$0.50. Section 4 eliminates the \$9 surcharge on resident fishing license fees once fish hatchery bonds are paid.

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SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked when hatchery bonds will be paid off.

MR. BANKS said he did not know. Section 9 and 11 accomplish the same thing as Section 3 for the resident combination licenses, as do Sections 13 and 15 for nonresident licenses. He noted that Section 5 raises the resident hunting license from \$25 to \$30, and Section 6 raises the resident hunting and trapping combination license. The resident trapping license is raised in Section 7, and Section 8 raises the resident hunting and fishing combination license from \$39 to \$45.

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MR. BANKS said that Section 10 raises the resident hunting, trapping, and fishing license fee and changes eligibility for low income purchasers. The bill eliminates language that allow residents who receive state or federal welfare to purchase a low income license unless they [are below] the federal poverty level.

CHAIR GIESEL asked for the current poverty guidelines.

MR. BANKS said it depends family size. He said Sections 11 and 13 add the \$9 surcharge to certain licenses. Sections 14, 16, and 17 raises nonresident licenses. Section 18 raises nonresident big game tags.

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MR. BANKS explained that Section 19 raises the waterfowl conservation tag from \$5 to \$10 and makes conforming amendments regarding age eligibility. He said Section 20 raises nonresident

small game hunting fees, Sections 21 and 22 raise nonresident alien license fees and tags, and Section 23 raises the resident king salmon tag, as well as making conforming amendments.

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MR. BANKS said Section 24 raises the nonresident king salmon tags, and Section 25 creates the fish and game conservation decal. Section 26 increases the age at which a license is required, from 16 years to 18 years, and requires a resident to be 62 years or older before qualifying for a permanent license, and requires renewal every three years. Sections 27 through 31 are conforming amendments. He added that Section 32 repeals all sections related fish hatchery bonds and the sport fishing surcharge, and Section 33 allows residents who are currently eligible and receiving the permanent license to remain eligible. Section 34 created codified language conforming to the full repayment of the hatchery bonds. Section 35 is applicability language related to the commissioner of Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Revisor of Statutes. Section 37 contains the applicable effective dates for the prior sections.

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SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked about changing the effective date.

MR. BANKS suggested changing it from January 1, 2016 to January 1, 2017.

SENATOR STOLTZE asked if paying off the debt service will be irrelevant to a person paying for the license. He asked for confirmation if the language will effectively keep the \$9 hatchery bond surcharge even after the bond has been fully paid.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO said yes.

SENATOR STOLTZE noted that it is only relevant to the department, which can use the surcharge elsewhere. He asked if "blind" is the correct terminology, and how it is defined.

MR. BANKS said he did not know.

CHAIR GIESSEL noted that this is existing language and suggested asking the department.

SENATOR STOLTZE surmised the term may be "visually-impaired."

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SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if there are benefits to a person buying a conservation decal.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO said the benefit is supporting wildlife conservation.

SENATOR STOLTZE asked about the Carlson decision [*Carlson v. State*] and its ramifications.

MR. BANKS said he provided a legal opinion to the members (tab 9 in the binder). He explained that the Carlson cases dealt with unequal fees charged for commercial fishing [on nonresidents], raising the issue of license fee inequality among American citizens who are residents of different states. The legal opinion points to a case in Montana where the US Supreme Court allowed nonresident sport hunters and fishers to be charged over 25 times more than residents.

SENATOR STOLTZE said he does not know the parameters, "so we'd be into some new ground."

CHAIR GIESSEL opined that legislative attorneys often give uncertain answers to legal questions.

SENATOR STOLTZE said that they tell legislators to figure it out.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he appreciates getting the legal opinion, which does state that the U.S. Supreme Court upheld sport hunting fees for elk that were more than 25 times the fee for a resident. Additionally, the opinion explains that states can charge nonresidents so high as to discourage them from the activity. He noted that his constituents are concerned about the incredible nonresident pressure on the fishing resources in Kenai and "up north" to the Matanuska Valley, and he has heard mention of a \$10 tag for nonresidents.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO said he has been approached by a lot of constituents saying that, at the very least, nonresidents are not contributing enough. There are others who believe that nonresidents should not even "be allowed to wet a line." Then there is the business community that recognizes the economic impact of nonresidents and striking a balance.

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SENATOR STOLTZE stated that he thought fees on black bears could be lowered or waived, because he sees the bears as infestations in some areas.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO said he does not live in black bear country, but he would be open to suggestions from the Department of Fish and Game.

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CHAIR GIESSEL invited witnesses to speak.

[4:27:09 PM](#)

KEVIN BROOKS, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), said that ADF&G would benefit from HB 137. The department appreciates the sponsor for introducing the bill. It has been about 25 years since fees have been increased, and the department has programs where the money could be used.

[4:28:50 PM](#)

SAM COTTEN, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, expressed strong support for HB 137. Meeting constitutional and statutory obligations will be greatly enhanced with its passage, he stated. The Division of Wildlife will be able to support intensive management programs, because capital improvement funds will be exhausted at some point. There are gaps in game management survey and inventory efforts, including population estimates for moose, bears, wolves, caribou, and others. Many areas and many species lack in surveys, and HB 137 will enhance those efforts.

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COMMISSIONER COTTEN said state management authority has been eroded by the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service. Money will help ADF&G work with the Department of Law [to address those issues]. Another area of underfunding is the 84 advisory committees, which is the primary opportunity for public participation in the management system. General funds of \$8 million are always at risk, although he does not want to just replace the general funds with fish and game funds. He noted that there are a lot of federal dollars, Pittman-Robertson funds, which may go unclaimed if the department cannot match them. He spoke of a need for funds for fish assessments and enhancements. Invasive species, such as the northern pike, are wreaking havoc on native species, especially salmon stocks, so funding those programs will be very important, as will funding for stream habitat rehabilitation.

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SENATOR STOLTZE asked if the department would waive fees for hunting black bears in some areas where the species is overpopulated.

COMMISSIONER COTTEN thanked Senator Stoltze for his vote of confidence on the bear management issues, and said it is logical and more cost efficient and effective method to waive hunting fees where there are efforts to get rid of predators.

[4:36:17 PM](#)

BRUCE DALE, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, said the Board of Game has authority to waive bear tag fees and in fact does that when it wants to increase bear hunting.

SENATOR STOLTZE asked the cost of relocating a black bear from Government Hill to "where they're now wandering around."

COMMISSIONER COTTEN said there was one bear that got away but is unlikely to be alive. He said he does not know the cost.

MR. BROOKS referred to some earlier questions and said that the state bond manager would say [the fish hatchery bonds] will be paid off in 2023. They have been paid at an advanced rate, and "we've done some early payoff of the debt," so the bonds might be paid by 2021, he added. Every year, the department issues about 19,000 poverty-level licenses for \$5, he noted. A person who earns less than \$8,200 or anyone who has received public assistance of any kind is eligible, and most people who get the license qualify based on receiving public assistance. The current federal poverty level for a family of four is \$30,000. There is no process to require verification. As a comparison, there currently are 1,000 license vendors around the state, and the agency does not check tax returns "or anything." He said he will check on the use of the term "blind."

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SENATOR MICCICHE asked why resident game tags are not being increased.

MR. BROOKS said the department was not involved in setting new fees. Several sporting groups gave input, he noted.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked if there are licenses in the bill that are no longer issued.

MR. BROOKS said he can provide a table of licenses sold. He told the committee that the Carlson court case, and the differential between resident and nonresident usage, dealt with interstate commerce and does not apply to recreational licenses. Already a nonresident pays \$100 for a license and a resident only pays \$15, and nonresidents pay for tags to take big game, and residents generally pay nothing.

[4:41:53 PM](#)

SENATOR STOLTZE asked how many wolverines are taken annually.

MR. DALE said he does not have the number, but he will find them. Buying tags is different than actually taking a wolverine. Many nonresidents buy tags and would like that rare opportunity.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked how Alaska's fees compare to those in other states.

MR. BROOKS said Alaska licenses are low compared to other western states. "It's a pretty darn good deal." He has a comparison chart that he can provide to the committee.

SENATOR STOLTZE asked if there was an "analysis of opportunity." He said deer are practically infestations in a lot of places, and has heard that a million and a half deer hunters show up on opening day in rural Pennsylvania. "Your chances for a deer in the lower-48 is certainly higher than the average person has for a moose or a brown bear or a Dall sheep." He added that the big trophy value is subjective, but the average person does not get the big trophy.

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MR. BROOKS said he has listened to different sport hunter groups, and they have analyzed tag fees versus opportunities.

MR. DALE explained that comparisons are made with western states and Canada with similar species. But regarding species like deer, many nonresidents do not see them as just deer, but they see them as Sitka black-tailed deer, and they come to Alaska to hunt them. He stated that the fees appear to be reasonable.

SENATOR STOLTZE said Mr. Dale's response was subjective, and he does not think there is much evidence that the fees are reasonable.

SENATOR MICCICHE asked about the legality of sockeye salmon tags for nonresidents only.

MR. BROOKS stated that there are fees for big game tags for nonresidents but not residents, but he can ask the Department of Law.

[4:47:50 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE pointed out the document from Legislative Legal stating in the Kemp case that North Dakota could exclude all nonresident hunters of migratory waterfowl when it was necessary to protect waterfowl from over hunting. He surmised that fish and game can be managed by not allowing nonresident users in some cases.

SENATOR STOLTZE said economic studies show that there is value in king salmon. He suggested charging a conservation fee for accidentally gillnetted King salmon that could go to the Sport Fish Division.

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MR. BROOKS said there have been discussions on taxing bycatch, but king salmon are caught legally by commercial fisheries.

COMMISSIONER COTTEN said bycatch includes unintended and sometimes prohibited species, but a king salmon caught in a gillnet intended for other salmon is legal. To charge for those fish would involve the Board of Fish and would be a legal question. Management tries to keep the number of gill-net caught king salmon very low.

SENATOR STOLTZE said some people try to do their best, but some consider [catching king salmon] as part of their plan. The economic value of the king salmon entering the river is "thousands of dollars" more, he stated.

COMMISSIONER COTTEN said the current management plan on the Kenai is very strict on ensuring a projected return before additional effort is allowed by the set net fisheries. He believes that Senator Stoltze is asking a legal question that he is uncomfortable answering.

SENATOR STOLTZE noted that he would never ask a moral question.

SENATOR MICCICHE said he is very interested in taxing bycatch. This bill may not be the place for it, but he would like to create disincentives for catching nontargeted species, particularly in offshore fisheries, which impacts all of us.

[4:53:36 PM](#)

CHARLES DERRICK, President, Chitina Dipnetters Association (CDA), Fairbanks, Alaska, said the CDA proposes a \$15 fee to obtain a personal-use Chitina dipnet permit to raise funds for road, garbage, and toilet maintenance. About 10,000 permits are issued each year for the fishery, which is managed by ADF&G separate from other personal-use fisheries. The association is not advocating for a fee on all personal-use fisheries, but it has been seeking state funds to clear landslides on sections of the state-owned Copper River highway right-of-way between O'Brien Creek and Hailey Creek. This is the main ground access to the fishery, and it is limited to all-terrain vehicles. Several vehicles have tumbled into the river [because of the landslide debris]. Prior to 2002, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) routinely cleared these hazards, and with funding, the department is willing to continue, he explained. He added that DOT has also borne the expense of contracting garbage and toilet maintenance in the area. Considering Alaska's financial difficulties, he said, the association is trying to be proactive in ensuring adequate facilities and maintenance by requesting the \$15 fee.

CHAIR GIESSEL lauded the idea and said her husband is a Chitina dipnetter.

[4:57:04 PM](#)

NANCY HILLSTRAND, representing herself, Kachemak Bay, Alaska, said she supports "the emblem idea," and she suggested a \$5 entry-level license for wildlife observers. People will get used to the idea that if they come to watch wildlife, they should pay for it. She suggested a \$20 license for commercial photographers and guides, because they benefit economically from Alaska's wildlife. There are 900,000 cruise ship passengers that visit Alaska each year, and with a \$5 fee for each person, "we could make close to \$5 million." Local artists are willing to donate their art for the license, and it will be a souvenir. The license would be purchased online and printed by purchasers, so there would be no cost to ADF&G. She added that she supports raising prices for hunters, and she believes that the fee exemption should start at 65 years of age, not 62. These people have the money, and most would want to contribute to ADF&G's efforts, she opined.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked Ms. Hillstrand to send her suggestions in writing. She noted the time and apologized to 11 other people who signed up to testify and told them that the committee will hear the bill again in about two weeks.

[HB 137 was held in committee.]

5:00:46 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee,
Chair Giessel adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.