

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 5, 2020

1:12 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative John Lincoln, Co-Chair

Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair

Representative Grier Hopkins, Vice Chair

Representative Sara Hannan

Representative Chris Tuck

Representative Ivy Spohnholz

Representative Dave Talerico

Representative George Rauscher

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Sara Rasmussen

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 197

"An Act extending the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission;  
and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 230

"An Act repealing the termination date for the intensive  
management hunting license surcharge."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 27

"An Act relating to the manufacture, sale, distribution, and labeling of child-related products containing certain flame retardant chemicals; relating to an interstate chemicals clearinghouse; adding unlawful acts to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 27(RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 197

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TUCK

01/21/20	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/20
01/21/20	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/20	(H)	RES, FIN
02/05/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 230

SHORT TITLE: INTENSIVE MGMT SURCHARGE/REPEAL TERM DATE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LINCOLN

01/29/20	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/29/20	(H)	RES, FIN
02/05/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 27

SHORT TITLE: REGULATION OF FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) TARR

02/20/19	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/11/19
02/20/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/19	(H)	RES, L&C
04/03/19	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/03/19	(H)	Heard & Held
04/03/19	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
04/05/19	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/05/19	(H)	Heard & Held
04/05/19	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
01/24/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
01/24/20	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
01/27/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
01/27/20	(H)	Heard & Held
01/27/20	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
01/29/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
01/29/20	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
01/31/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
01/31/20	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
02/03/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
02/03/20	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
02/05/20	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

**WITNESS REGISTER**

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Audit Division  
Legislative Agencies and Offices  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided comments and answered questions during the hearing of HB 197.

STERLING STRAIT, Chair  
Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission  
Office of the Governor  
Boards and Commissions  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided comments and answered questions during the hearing of HB 197.

ELIZABETH FERGUSON, Staff  
Representative John Lincoln  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Speaking on behalf of Representative Lincoln, sponsor of HB 230, introduced the bill.

EDDIE GRASSER, Director  
Division of Wildlife Conservation  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing of HB 230.

VIC VAN BALLENGBERGHE, PhD  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition during the hearing of HB 230.

ROD ARNO, Executive Director  
Alaska Outdoor Council

Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the hearing of HB 230.

DOUG LARSEN, President  
Territorial Sportsman, Inc.  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the hearing of HB 230.

RON SOMERVILLE  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the hearing of HB 230.

THOR STACEY, Lobbyist  
Alaska Professional Hunters Association  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support during the hearing of HB 230.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:12:06 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR GERAN TARR** called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:12 p.m. Representatives Hannan, Talerico, Rauscher, Tuck, Hopkins, Lincoln, and Tarr were present at the call to order. Representative Spohnholz arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **HB 197-EXTEND SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION**

[1:14:24 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR announced the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 197, "An Act extending the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission; and providing for an effective date."

[1:14:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK, speaking as the sponsor of HB 197, said the bill would extend the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission through 6/30/28. Alaska is one of the most seismically active regions on Earth and has a history of very large and damaging earthquakes; last month the Alaska Earthquake Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, reported in 2019 Alaska experienced 50,289 earthquakes. So far in 2020, Alaska has experienced 3,131 earthquakes. In order to ensure the safety of Alaskans and Alaska's infrastructure, since 2001 the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission (ASHSC) has provided recommendations to mitigate seismic hazards by gathering and disseminating information on earthquakes to state and local governmental agencies and policymakers; in addition, ASHSC facilitates training on how to assess structures after an earthquake. The bill includes an immediate effective date because the current authorization expires [6/30/20]. Representative Tuck pointed out the attached fiscal note - identifier: HB 197-DNR-DGGS-1-31-2020 - totals \$10,000 per year for support that is not provided by volunteers. Included in the committee packet was Audit Control Number 10-20117-19, which specifically recommended the extension of ASHSC through 2028. He concluded Alaska is threatened by earthquakes every day and ASHSC plays a key role

to prepare the public and private sectors for future earthquakes.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked when the commission was formed.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK said in 2001.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked whether commissions are required by statute to have a sunset date.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK said yes, and also a sunset audit. He added performance audits seek to ensure the commission continues to perform as intended.

CO-CHAIR TARR opined performance audit reports are presented in legislative committees, so the audit becomes part of the public record.

[1:19:27 PM](#)

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor, Legislative Audit Division, Legislative Agencies and Offices, informed the committee she is responsible for the Legislative Audit Division which audits the state's financial statements and prepares the state's federal audit, the results of which are reported to the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee. She said testimony before [standing and special legislative committees] usually pertains to a sunset audit or a performance audit related to legislation. Ms. Curtis stated her office conducted a sunset audit of the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission in March 2019; the purpose of a sunset audit is to determine whether a board or commission is serving its public policy need and should be extended. Not all boards

and commissions have a sunset provision and not all boards and commissions with a sunset date in legislation are subject to audit. She reviewed the mission of ASHSC: To help reduce disaster potential of major earthquakes and to reduce the dependence on disaster relief. The audit concluded there is a public policy need for the commission and recommended an eight-year extension, which is the maximum allowed by statute. On page 9 of the audit was a schedule of annual expenditures ranging from \$3,517 in fiscal year 2018 (FY 18) to \$13,043 in FY 17 and she noted ASHSC expenditures are a relatively low cost method to leverage the highly skilled expertise of volunteers. Beginning on page 12 was a schedule of commission activities that indicated the commission was very active during the audit period; she pointed out ASHSC helped secure Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants used by school districts to assess their facilities. Beginning on page 14 was a description of ASHSC's role following the 11/30/18 earthquake: provided a list of certified evaluators to inspect structures; helped coordinate damage assessments with state agencies; assisted FEMA to create a damage report and recommendations for future preparedness. Beginning on page 16 the audit made two recommendations for administrative improvements:

- Commission chair should ensure proper procedures to provide public notice for meetings
- Commission chair should ensure strategic plan update

MS. CURTIS said beginning on page 27 were responses to the audit: 1) The office of the governor did not comment on whether the ASHSC should be extended; 2) The commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources agreed there is a continuing

need for the commission; 3) The ASHSC chair agreed with the audit findings and recommendations and has taken action.

[1:24:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN pointed out the [11/30/18] earthquake motivated discussion and forthcoming legislation related to statewide residential building codes and building standards; she asked whether ASHSC is positioned to make recommendations on seismic risk in this regard.

MS. CURTIS expressed her belief ASHSC has made recommendations to the [Alaska State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers and Land Surveyors, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (licensing board)] that in order to obtain licensing an applicant would be required to have certain professional education in building codes.

[1:25:46 PM](#)

STERLING STRAIT, Chair, ASHSC, Office of the Governor, Boards and Commissions, informed the committee ASHSC studied reports from many entities following the 11/30/18 earthquake that have raised the building code issue; at this time, ASHSC is drafting recommendations on specific improvements to building codes at the state and local levels. Previously, ASHSC made recommendations to the licensing board to add a seismic education requirement for licensed architects and engineers because an understanding of seismic data would encourage more appropriate design.

1:26:54 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN questioned whether professional licensing and education on seismic data is required of residential contractors, in addition to architects and engineers.

MR. STRAIT said to his knowledge there are no requirements of seismic education for building contractors; ASHSC recommendations apply to licenses of architects and engineers.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS recalled [FY 20] capital funding for the [USArray, National Science Foundation] was vetoed, and is now included in the FY 21 budget; he asked whether ASHSC uses data from USArray to locate earthquakes.

MR. STRAIT said yes; data from USArray centers locates seismic risks in Alaska, gives ASHSC a better understanding of how to respond to risks, which communities are at risk, which communities need appropriate construction to mitigate seismic risk, and where emergency capability and response is needed. He added, "Our commission put out a policy recommendation last year, during the buildup to the capital budget discussion, as going on the record to support the university in that funding, ... in their goal of adopting those USArray stations. It will help our state be in a better position." In further response to Representative Hopkins, he explained prior to data provided by USArray beginning in 2016, there was one seismic center in the Brooks Range and one in Prudhoe Bay, "and we had really a big blind spot to what seismic activity was going on up there." After USArray, there are two separate regions in the Brooks Range, one near Kobuk, and another near Atigun Pass, that have reported an earthquake cluster, which is a large number of

small- to medium-size earthquakes, that would have remained undetected but are now being studied. Mr. Strait concluded USArray reveals where seismic risks are and thereby improves safety.

[1:30:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked Mr. Strait to explain the difference between an earthquake swarm and an earthquake cluster.

MR. STRAIT said both terms refer to a series of small- to medium-size earthquakes occurring in the same geographical area within a few square miles of one another, but not tied to a large event.

CO-CHAIR TARR inquired as to whether the state estimates the monetary value of the contributions made by the extensive volunteer service that is provided to state boards and commissions.

MS. CURTIS said the value referred to by Co-Chair Tarr is not included in the criteria listed in the sunset audit report [on pages 25 and 26]. Further, she cautioned about the amount of [staff] resources required to determine said value.

CO-CHAIR TARR, speaking from her previous experience, stated nonprofits estimate the value of skilled labor and volunteer hours to determine the value of their contributions. She expressed her appreciation for volunteers.

[1:33:34 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR opened public testimony on HB 197.

[1:34:00 PM](#)

MR. STRAIT said ASHSC is proud of its work and the results of the audit report; the audit recognized accomplishments made by ASHSC volunteers over the last few years. He said ASHSC seeks to continue serving for the next eight years to improve seismic safety in Alaska.

[1:34:51 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR, after ascertaining no one further wished to testify, closed public testimony.

[HB 197 was held over.]

**HB 230-INTENSIVE MGMT SURCHARGE/REPEAL TERM DATE**

[1:35:53 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR announced the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 230, "An Act repealing the termination date for the intensive management hunting license surcharge."

[1:37:24 PM](#)

ELIZABETH FERGUSON, Staff, Representative John Lincoln, Alaska State Legislature, speaking on behalf of Representative Lincoln, sponsor of HB 230, informed the committee the bill repeals the sunset date for the intensive management [hunting license] surcharge. The surcharge was implemented in 2016 by [House Bill 137, passed in the Thirtieth Alaska State Legislature] which

authorized a collection rate of \$10 per resident hunting license and \$30 per nonresident hunting license. In three years, the surcharge has grossed approximately \$3.1 million; HB 230 does not increase or change the amount of the surcharge, or change intensive management policy, but the surcharge funds activities that allow the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) to use federal matching funds. Ms. Ferguson pointed out the zero fiscal note attached to the bill, fiscal note identifier: HB230-DFG-DWC-1-31-20, indicates that without revenue from the surcharge, ADFG may lose up to \$4 million per year, which would hamper management, research, inventory, and surveying.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked for the purpose of the sunset provision [in House Bill 137] and how repeal of the sunset provision may affect the specific use of the revenue raised by the surcharge.

CO-CHAIR LINCOLN deferred to Representative Talerico to explain the original purpose of the sunset provision. Regarding the use of the revenue from the surcharge, he said the funds are deposited in a specific fund that is subject to [legislative] appropriation.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO explained House Bill 137 was complicated thus the inclusion of a sunset date ensured that the legislation would be reviewed to determine the efficacy of the program and whether the rates were appropriate.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN directed attention to a map [provided by ADFG and included in the committee packet] noting the areas of intensive management (IM) relate to moose, caribou, and deer.

She surmised the funds are not used for "a specific deer, moose, or caribou plan ...."

[1:41:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO acknowledged IM is usually associated strictly with predator control but IM includes habitat improvement and gathering data to inform conservation measures and ensure a continual supply of the resource; he opined without [wildlife resource management] there would be impacts to all residents, particularly subsistence hunters and others. Speaking from his experience, Representative Talerico restated a major facet of IM is gathering data related to maintaining habitat at a level to provide the resources that are mandated for the residents of Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN observed IM in the next ten years will focus on habitat due to changes in the typical ranges of the migration of moose and caribou. She expressed support for the bill.

CO-CHAIR TARR asked for clarification on the aforementioned federal matching funds.

[1:45:38 PM](#)

EDDIE GRASSER, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, ADFG, stated a large part of IM revenue is directed to habitat work, and survey and inventory work, to determine the abundance of game populations such as moose, caribou, and deer. Further, the IM surcharge revenue allows ADFG to match [Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, also known as the Pittman-Robertson

Wildlife Restoration Program (PR)] federal funds: every state dollar raised from IM garners three federal dollars. All of the revenue is directed to a dedicated PR fund that can only be used for fish and wildlife issues. In further response to Co-Chair Tarr, he confirmed these measures were implemented at statehood.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ asked for a description of the Pittman-Robertson fund and of some of the habitat-related projects funded by the surcharge.

MR. GRASSER explained the Pittman-Robertson (PR) fund was created in 1937 by a national tax on the sale of firearms and ammunition; the tax was promoted by hunters to raise funds for wildlife management. House Bill 137 was also promoted by Alaskan hunters. Since its inception, the PR fund has been used for various activities; in addition, Alaska law [AS 16.05.100 Fish and Game Fund] requires the fund to be used primarily for hunting management. Other programs funded by PR funds include [Eagle River Nature Center] wildlife viewing and state refuges and sanctuaries. Pittman-Robertson is a federal law which creates a 3:1 match; this year PR funds to the state are expected to be \$26 million. Examples of wildlife habitat restoration projects funded by the IM surcharge are projects in Tok and Delta, and a prescribed burn in the Alphabet Hills near Glennallen. In further response to Representative Spohnholz, he said natural fires are a regeneration mechanism for successional growth upon which most game species live; much of Alaska is forested with black spruce which does not provide nutrition for wildlife. So, prescribed burns are used to replace black spruce with willow to create better habitat for moose and caribou.

[1:50:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS questioned whether Alaska has directed money to options and research such as preserving apex predators and allowing them to cull herds, thereby preserving habitat, as has been done successfully in some Lower 48 national parks.

MR. GRASSER agreed [the reintroduction of wolves] into Yellowstone National Park caused some changes in habitat to occur; however, in Alaska habitat covers large areas of land that are not riparian in nature, and available data shows management for abundant moose and caribou results in the population of apex predators growing with the population of moose and caribou.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked whether there has been long-term research on the effect on herds in Alaska related to leaving apex predators in place.

MR. GRASSER gave the example of the Fortymile Caribou Herd: [due to predation by] apex predators, the herd was in a low equilibrium predator pit and numbered approximately 2,000 animals for many years; [from 2000-2010], ADFG began predator control programs and the caribou herd expanded.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS inquired as to whether there is research from Denali National Park and Preserve.

MR. GRASSER said yes. Where there are management programs, most populations, including apex predators, are healthy; where there are no management programs, ungulate populations are down, and apex predators have migrated elsewhere.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked:

The [Teklanika] wolf pack around the Denali buffer area, ... and looking at the populations in that ... pack in that area, how has this money been spent on researching the impacts of predator control in that area and expansions of herds of moose.

MR. GRASSER expressed his understanding ADGF has no active IM programs in that area and offered to provide further information in this regard.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS inquired as to how much IM money was spent on predator control.

MR. GRASSER said in FY 18 ADFG spent \$180,000 for predator control, out of approximately \$1 million collected by the surcharge.

[1:54:26 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS requested a breakdown of the amount of IM money spent during the two previous fiscal years for research, predator control, and habitat management. He expressed support for the bill to further critical science-based research on habitat, predator control, and IM.

[1:55:32 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR opened public testimony on HB 230.

[1:56:26 PM](#)

VIC VAN BALLEMBERGHE, PhD, informed the committee he is a moose and wolf biologist who served three terms on the Board of Game (BOG), ADFG, during two administrations. He said HB 230 seeks to repeal the sunset of the IM surcharge, however, the issue involves the state's public policy related to intensive management. Twenty-six years after Alaska established an IM law, it is known that IM has enabled controversial methods of reducing predators, such as public aerial shooting of wolves and bears, gassing of wolf pups in dens, and sales of bear body parts. He characterized these practices as controversial even among hunters, and hunting guides, and pointed out Alaska ballot initiatives have restricted wolf control. Further known is that intensive management is expensive, but its exact costs are not readily available; in fact, there have been special legislative appropriations and IM costs have been funded by ADFG's "regular" budget for amounts from \$1 million to \$2 million per year, in addition to the surcharge. He said, "... for every moose that was produced through IM in recent years the cost was around \$7,000 per animal ...." He concluded IM is controversial and costly and may not be effective. Dr. Van Ballenberghe urged the committee to let the sunset provision prevail pending further evaluation.

CO-CHAIR TARR surmised decisions on some of the aforementioned practices would rest with the Board of Game and asked whether BOG addresses issues satisfactorily.

[2:01:03 PM](#)

DR. VAN BALLEMBERGHE recalled "things were different" when he served on BOG; BOG had a more general view of wildlife

management prior to 2002. He acknowledged BOG has a tough job to balance disparate views; however, recently some are critical of BOG for being too narrowly focused and willing to adopt controversial predator control methods, and unwilling to consider a broader perspective, for example, using apex predators to preserve an ecosystem rather than producing the maximum number of animals for hunters.

[2:03:03 PM](#)

ROD ARNO, Executive Director, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), expressed support for the repeal of the surcharge and informed the committee AOC advocated for the passage of House Bill 137 in 2016. He said the money collected for the surcharge is paid by the sale of hunting licenses, and well over one-half of the funds is paid by approximately 10,000 nonresident hunters per year. Mr. Arno noted the original legislation provides an exemption that grants \$5 licenses to 17,000 [hunters] and some hunters are not charged. Over one-third of the surcharge is paid by nonresidents, and he stressed nonresident and resident hunters are willing to pay the surcharge if the money is used to increase the abundance of harvestable surplus of the wild food source for Alaskans. In fact, 34 million pounds of renewable and wild food source is extremely important. He said AOC and its 10,000 members are willing to continue to pay the surcharge to support science and ensure game is available for Alaskans.

[2:06:30 PM](#)

DOUG LARSEN, President, Territorial Sportsman, Inc. (TSI), informed the committee TSI was founded in 1945 and one of its missions is to raise money for high school students' higher

education. He said he worked for ADFG for 30 years and provided a brief work history which included experience with intensive management; TSI supports HB 230. Mr. Larsen recalled at one time IM was funded by ADFG capital improvement projects (CIPs); however, CIP funding has been replaced by the IM surcharge. He agreed with previous testifiers that although revenue from the IM surcharge can be used for predator control, more often the funding supports programs directed at habitat. For example, in 2014, in Ketchikan, and near Petersburg and Wrangell, there were proposals to reduce the wolf population; however, ADFG invested IM funds to assess the habitat in the areas and concluded, in these situations, the problem was limited habitat and not the wolf population. He said fisheries and wildlife managers need data to make better decisions; he acknowledged that sometimes reducing predators is appropriate, but without revenue from the surcharge, data is difficult to obtain. He restated TSI's support for HB 230.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK questioned whether the amount of the surcharge is enough.

MR. LARSEN advised matching the PR funds was a challenge in the past and deferred to Mr. Grasser.

CO-CHAIR TARR observed specific techniques of IM are what garner negative attention and asked whether certain practices should be limited by the legislature.

[2:11:17 PM](#)

MR. LARSEN stated the aforementioned issue is a "values issue." There are many ways to reduce predators and ADFG seeks to

humanely reduce predators without any intent to be cruel. He pointed out wildlife in Alaska is managed on a sustained yield basis, as directed by the Alaska State Constitution, and needs to be effective and cost-effective without regard for personal values. Mr. Larsen remarked:

And again, what I would offer is as long as the efforts that are being done are done humanely, and with the right approach given the circumstances, I think that's where the line should be. And I think, honestly, the Board of Game has done a pretty good job with that ... weighing the pros and cons of various aspects of that ....

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked Mr. Larson if intensive management is a standard wildlife management practice used to assess [populations] or is IM targeted at [maintaining] harvestable populations for consumption. She suggested politics affect intensive management practices that are really BOG issues. She pointed out if ADFG is responsible to ensure a sustained yield, and IM is standard management practice, there must be a revenue stream to support the program.

MR. LARSEN advised [Senate Bill 77, passed in the Eighteenth Alaska State Legislature amending AS 16.05.255] was focused on deer, moose, and caribou, and tasked BOG to identify populations of moose, caribou, and deer that would be used for high levels of human consumption. Prior to that, and currently, survey and inventory work were done on many species; however, IM efforts were specifically focused to identify populations of deer, moose, and caribou. He pointed out not every area identified by BOG has an active management program in place.

[2:16:22 PM](#)

MR. GRASSER, in response to Representative Tuck's earlier question, indicated the current surcharge is sufficient to support an effective program.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER surmised a prescribed burn would be conducted in conjunction with the Division of Forestry, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and asked whether surcharge revenue would be used.

MR. GRASSER advised prescribed burns are conducted by a team from both divisions and costs are borne by both DNR and ADFG. In further response to Representative Rauscher, he expressed his belief costs are paid from general operating funds.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ questioned whether prescribed burns can benefit wildlife management and fire suppression.

MR. GRASSER said yes; for example, ADFG, DNR, and federal agencies worked as a team during the [2019 Swan Lake fire on the Kenai Peninsula].

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK returned attention to PR federal matching funds and asked whether the state could leverage more funds if the state could contribute more.

MR. GRASSER said not at this time because there is a downturn of available PR revenue from the Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. In further response to Representative Tuck, he said, "The cap is whatever our

apportionment is going to be, so at this point, I guess, ... we've probably hit the cap."

[2:19:52 PM](#)

RON SOMERVILLE informed the committee he is a Territorial Sportsman Inc., member and is representing himself. He cautioned HB 230 does not address the debate over predator management and agreed with previous testimony that IM garners controversy related to wolf or bear management. As background, Mr. Somerville said he worked 24 years with ADFG and while he was serving on the Board of Game, BOG reinstated a predator management program in Game Management Unit (GMU) 19, under a new process to evaluate predator management programs which specified four or five criterion: public support, local support, money to evaluate the success of the program, and some reasonable chance of success. He opined BOG mostly follows the aforementioned criteria in its use of IM, and IM is not used statewide; in fact, one-half of Alaska belongs to the federal government which leads to conflict over the level of the state's management authority in certain areas, and predator management is prohibited in refuges and parks. One of the purposes of [the surcharge] is to provide money to ADFG that is not limited by PR matching fund regulations; he pointed out if [ADFG] decides to harvest predators in certain areas, PR money cannot be used, and ADFG must use general funds or fish and game funds. He spoke in favor of legislative oversight over ADFG and encouraged the committee to continue [the surcharge for] IM because the money is needed to provide benefits to all Alaskans as the constitution requires.

[2:25:12 PM](#)

THOR STACEY, Lobbyist, Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), informed the committee APHA is a professional association representing hunting guides statewide. He said APHA supports [HB 203] and further written testimony was provided in the committee packet. He noted APHA participated in the coalition of sporting groups that supported House Bill 137. Also, APHA supports the current amount of the surcharge. Mr. Stacey clarified intensive management statutes are a mandate for managing, on state land, Alaska wildlife - moose, deer, and caribou - for high levels of human consumption; historically, general fund appropriations have been used in this regard. In fact, the state must avoid using PR funds for activities involving intensive management because federal policy now prohibits predator control measures that were accepted when Alaska was a territory. Therefore, the surcharge is a bright-line accounting measure to demonstrate there is a funding source, separate from PR funds, to fund IM programs. Mr. Stacey pointed out most of Alaska is Fish and Wildlife and National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, lands, which are managed under a program of non-intensive management. Further, in the Denali Borough and Denali National Park and Preserve, there is currently a "hands-off" approach to wildlife management; however, on surrounding state land, state management practices include IM. Currently, moose and wolves are more abundant on state land because the low-equilibrium status of ungulates has been avoided and most are consumed by wild predators. He remarked:

As the Board of Game looks at an area, there's different tiers are basically the carrying capacity for the habitat, they have a population objective, so

you have a maximum carrying capacity, then you have an objective, what the wildlife managers would like to see the population at. And then if there's a positive IM finding, you have the next stage is an IM threshold and that's where intensive management would be considered .... ... Finally, you have ANS which is the amount necessary for subsistence, so you have your population objective, you have your IM threshold, and then you have the minimum amounts necessary for subsistence. And then at some point below that, there's not enough harvestable surplus for human hunting to continue ....

MR. STACEY restated APHA's reasons for supporting HB 203.

[2:31:10 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR, after ascertaining no one further wished to testify, closed public testimony.

[HB 230 was held over.]

**HB 27-REGULATION OF FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS**

[2:32:12 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR announced the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 27, "An Act relating to the manufacture, sale, distribution, and labeling of child-related products containing certain flame retardant chemicals; relating to an interstate chemicals clearinghouse; adding unlawful acts to the Alaska

Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act; and providing for an effective date."

Before the committee was Version S, adopted on 1/27/20.

[2:33:44 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR moved to adopt [Amendment 1], labeled 31-LS 0198\S.4, Bannister, 1/23/20, which read:

Page 4, line 16:

Delete "2020"

Insert "2021"

CO-CHAIR TARR asked for any objection to adopting Amendment 1, which would amend the effective date of the bill. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

[2:35:29 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR LINCOLN moved to report the committee substitute for HB 27, labeled 31-LS0198\S, Bannister, 4/30/19, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 27(RES) was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee.

[2:37:00 PM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:37 p.m.