

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 29, 2022

1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Josiah Patkotak, Chair
Representative Grier Hopkins, Vice Chair
Representative Calvin Schrage
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Mike Cronk
Representative Ronald Gillham
Representative Tom McKay

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Zack Fields

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 204 (RES)

"An Act relating to auctions or raffles for hunting harvest permits and big game tags; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 349

"An Act relating to the establishment of oil and gas drilling units and patterns."

- MOVED CSHB 349 (RES) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 204

SHORT TITLE: HUNTING PERMIT/TAG AUCTIONS/RAFFLES

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) REVAK

02/22/22	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/22/22	(S)	RES, FIN
03/02/22	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/02/22	(S)	Heard & Held
03/02/22	(S)	MINUTE (RES)
03/16/22	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/16/22	(S)	Moved CSSB 204 (RES) Out of Committee

03/16/22 (S) MINUTE (RES)
 03/18/22 (S) RES RPT CS 5DP 1NR SAME TITLE
 03/18/22 (S) DP: REVAK, STEVENS, MICCICHE, VON
 IMHOF, KIEHL
 03/18/22 (S) NR: KAWASAKI
 03/30/22 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 03/30/22 (S) Heard & Held
 03/30/22 (S) MINUTE (FIN)
 04/05/22 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
 04/05/22 (S) Moved CSSB 204 (RES) Out of Committee
 04/05/22 (S) MINUTE (FIN)
 04/06/22 (S) FIN RPT CS (RES) 5DP 2NR SAME TITLE
 04/06/22 (S) DP: BISHOP, HOFFMAN, WILSON,
 WIELECHOWSKI, VON IMHOF
 04/06/22 (S) NR: STEDMAN, OLSON
 04/11/22 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 04/11/22 (S) VERSION: CSSB 204 (RES)
 04/13/22 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/13/22 (H) RES, FIN
 04/25/22 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 04/25/22 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/29/22 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 349

SHORT TITLE: HEARING ESTABLISH DRILLING UNITS/SPACING
 SPONSOR (s): REPRESENTATIVE (s) RAUSCHER

02/22/22 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/22/22 (H) CRA, RES
 03/29/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
 03/29/22 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/05/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
 04/05/22 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/07/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
 04/07/22 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/12/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
 04/12/22 (H) Heard & Held
 04/12/22 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
 04/14/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
 04/14/22 (H) Heard & Held
 04/14/22 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
 04/19/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
 04/19/22 (H) Moved CSHB 349 (CRA) Out of Committee
 04/19/22 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
 04/20/22 (H) CRA RPT CS (CRA) 5DP
 04/20/22 (H) DP: MCCARTY, MCCABE, PRAX, HANNAN,
 SCHRAGE

04/27/22 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/27/22 (H) Heard & Held
04/27/22 (H) MINUTE (RES)
04/29/22 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR JOSH REVAK
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented CSSB 204 (RES).

EMMA TORKELSON, Staff
Senator Josh Revak
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Senator Revak, prime sponsor, presented the sectional analysis for CSSB 204 (RES).

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

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of CSSB 204 (RES).

JOHN STURGEON, President
Safari Club International, Alaska Chapter (SCI-AK)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of CSSB 204 (RES).

THOR STACEY, Director of Governmental Affairs
Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of CSSB 204 (RES).

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:02:57 PM](#)

CHAIR JOSIAH PATKOTAK called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Representatives McKay, Cronk, Hannan, Schrage, and Patkotak were present at the call to order. Representatives Hopkins, Gillham, and Rauscher arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 204-HUNTING PERMIT/TAG AUCTIONS/RAFFLES

1:03:47 PM

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that the first order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 204(RES), "An Act relating to auctions or raffles for hunting harvest permits and big game tags; and providing for an effective date."

1:04:19 PM

SENATOR JOSH REVAK, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented CSSB 204(RES). He related that since its passage in 1997, the Governor's Auction and Raffle Tag program has successfully and substantially increased the funding for the wildlife conservation programs and outdoor tradition educational efforts of Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). He said CSSB 204(RES) seeks to build on this success and expand ADF&G's ability to bring in revenue by adding one new species and increasing the maximum number of permits that ADF&G can issue to be auctioned or raffled. The funds, he continued, will support wildlife conservation, wildlife protection, and education programs across Alaska.

SENATOR REVAK explained that with the large increase in firearm and ammunition sales, and approximately \$18 million in new Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds becoming available soon, ADF&G will need sufficient matching dollars to prevent these new PR funds from reverting back to the federal government. A comparable expansion took place in 2014, he stated, when House Bill 161 made similarly sized increases to the number of harvest permits that could be issued annually and added several new species to the list. Revenue jumped as a result and increased revenue is anticipated this time as well with the possibility of a lot more in PR federal matching funds.

SENATOR REVAK pointed out that modern wildlife management is becoming more expensive. For example, he said, the increased cost of aviation fuel has a major impact on survey and inventory operations which are a key element in setting game population and harvest objectives. Without accurate objectives, he stated, the Board of Game cannot make well informed decisions on yearly hunting seasons and bag limits. In sum, he continued, CSSB 204(RES) will allow more federal revenue to be leveraged for wildlife management programs, education programs, proactive work to prevent new listings under the Endangered Species Act, and the support of hunters and outdoor recreation users.

1:07:30 PM

EMMA TORKELSON, Staff, Senator Josh Revak, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Senator Revak, prime sponsor, presented the sectional analysis of CSSB 204(RES). She spoke from the document in the committee packet titled "Senate Bill 204 - Sectional Analysis Updated for Version W," which read as follows [original punctuation provided with some formatting changes]:

Section 1. Amends AS 16.05.343(a):

- **Page 1 Lines 6-7:** Adds Afognak and Raspberry Island Herds to the type of Elk harvest permits that can be donated by the department to be auctioned or raffled.
- **Page 1 Line 6:** Changes the number of harvest permits that can be donated for Etohin, Afognak, or Raspberry Elk herds from four to two.
- **Page 1 Line 9:** Adds the word "wildlife" in front of "conservation" to clarify that the nonprofits who qualify to receive these donated harvest permits must be established to promote education in outdoor traditions and "wildlife" conservation and wildlife protection programs in partnership with the department.

Section 2. Amends 16.05.343(c):

- **Page 1 Line 14 - Page 2 Line 4:** Removes differing tag limits for individual species and allows up to four harvest permits to be issued for all the listed species.
- **Page 2 Line 1-8:** Adds to the list of permits that can be auctioned or raffled four McNeil River State Game Sanctuary bear-viewing permits and "emperor goose."
- **Page 2 Lines 13-30:** Revisor changes that move (1) outlining a 70/30 revenue split between the Department of Fish and Game and the qualified nonprofit (2) limiting use of the funds by the organization to approved programs and prohibiting use of the funds for any political campaign or candidate into two new subsections in Section 4 of this bill.

- **Page 2 Lines 12 & 13, Page 3 Lines 1, 2, & 5:** Removes "big game" from any mention of "big game harvest permit" so that all the permits are referred to consistently by the broader "harvest permit."

- **Page 3 Lines 3 & 4:** Retains the inscription on the hunting license issued under this subsection as "Governor's license" but gives the Commissioner of DF&G or a designee the authority to sign off on the permits.

Section 3. Amends AS 16.05.343(e):

- **Page 3 Line 11:** Standardizes language that outlines how the revenue can be used and how an organization can qualify for these permits by adding that a nonprofit must promote education in "wildlife conservation" and conduct "wildlife" conservation programs in order to qualify as an organization that can conduct auctions or raffles for the department.

Section 4. Amends AS 16.05.343 by adding new subsections:

- **Page 3 Lines 19-25:** Reinserts the language removed in Section 2 to create a new subsection (f) that requires that all revenue earned from an auction or raffle of harvest permits be paid to the Department of Fish and Game EXCEPT an amount not to exceed 30%, which the qualified organization putting on the auction or raffle can retain for the administrative costs of holding the auction/raffle and approved projects and educational programs that support outdoor tradition, wildlife conservation, and wildlife protection.

- **Page 3 Lines 26 - Page 4 Line 4:** Reinserts the language removed in Section 2 to create a new subsection (g) explicitly limiting use of the funds by the organization to approved programs listed in (f) and prohibiting use of the funds for any "candidate for political office," "organization supporting or opposing ballot propositions," and "expenses associated with lobbying the legislature or administration."

Section 5. Sets an immediate effective date.

1:11:00 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked whether there is a list of organizations that have received these donations from permits. He further asked which organizations might now be disallowed because of the change to saying only wildlife conservation.

SENATOR REVAK deferred to Mr. Grasser to provide an answer.

1:11:39 PM

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER inquired whether the \$18 million in PR funds has already been approved to come Alaska's way. He further asked how those funds come to Alaska.

SENATOR REVAK replied that PR funds are matching federal funds that "when Alaska spends money they match." He explained that when the nonprofits auction these tags, ADF&G gets 70 percent. Those funds are matched using PR funds, he said, so it will be potentially millions of dollars. He recounted that last year [the legislature] passed a measure where these raffle tickets could be sold out of state, which drastically increased the revenues to the state. Essentially Alaska is taking voluntary dollars to fund its fish and game while it is doing a good job promoting healthy hunting practices and wildlife conservation, he continued. Pittman-Robertson is an ongoing program, and those funds are there, so Alaska is able to match quite a bit. He deferred to Mr. Grasser to address what the numbers are.

1:13:26 PM

CHAIR PATKOTAK observed that Section 1 of the bill would add [two] herds and would change the total number of harvest permits. He requested clarification as to whether it would be two harvest permits per each island herd or two permits for the [three] herds in aggregate.

MS. TORKELSON answered that it is two total, so ADF&G will choose up to two permits for either the Raspberry Island, Afognak Island, or Etolin Island herds.

1:14:16 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked for further clarification on whether it is two per herd per year or ADF&G chooses one herd per year for two harvest permits for auction.

MS. TORKELSON responded two total and ADF&G could issue one permit for one herd and another permit for another herd, or two permits from the same herd.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN stated she has questions regarding the addition of emperor geese.

MS. TORKELSON replied that questions should be directed to ADF&G given the department recommended the addition of emperor geese.

CHAIR PATKOTAK requested Mr. Grasser to provide ADF&G's invited testimony.

1:15:35 PM

EDDIE GRASSER, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, provided invited testimony in support of CSSB 204(RES). To provide background, he related that he was asked to work on the original legislation in the 1990s and on the revisions in 2014. In relation to CSSB 204(RES), he recounted that three years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic everyone was worried about budget cuts to Alaska's agencies. He said that during a discussion at his division about where to make cuts he suggested figuring out a way to find more revenue. Last year, he continued, ADF&G grossed \$1.2 million dollars and it is his belief that with the additions in CSSB 204(RES) about \$5 million can be raised annually for matching purposes with PR dollars.

MR. GRASSER, regarding the question about organizations, said the division sends out a call for proposals to a list of about 40 organizations, which he will get to the committee. In most cases, he stated, only about 15-16 organizations on the list have ever applied for a permit. Regarding the \$18 million, he informed the committee that ADF&G will receive that money this year and must find a match for those funds. He further stated that if the Recovering America's Wildlife Act passes Congress this year, ADF&G will receive an additional \$32 million on top of the other \$30 million that the department regularly gets from Pittman-Robertson, meaning ADF&G will have a lot of cash to match. The department can do in-kind work, he said, but creative thinking will be needed to come up with match funding so that the funds don't revert to the federal government.

MR. GRASSER, regarding the addition of emperor goose to the list, reported that [ADF&G] has had conversations with Ducks Unlimited, Delta Waterfowl, other waterfowl organizations, and bird dog organizations, and the department probably will not be offering any emperor goose permits in the near term because the population, while not necessarily in trouble, is low. He said ADF&G has always retained the authority to issue a permit or not issue a permit based on the department's biological surveys. If the emperor goose population comes back, he related, Ducks Unlimited could probably get \$100,000 for that permit.

MR. GRASSER stated that ADF&G supports the bill.

[1:19:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS said he found the list of organizations in the committee packet. He observed that a few of the organizations which have applied for or received the donations are from out of state, such as Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife Utah ("SFW Utah"). He asked if it is standard to give out these donations of tags and hunting permits to out-of-state entities.

MR. GRASSER responded that under current statute an out-of-state entity can apply for the permits but must do so through a registered nonprofit that is incorporated within the state of Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS inquired whether the nonprofit entity in Alaska gets the funding or whether SFW Utah gets the funding even though there is an SFW chapter in Alaska.

MR. GRASSER answered that the Alaska chapter gets the funding.

[1:21:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked what the percentage or dollar amount would be of the \$18 million in Pittman-Robertson funds in relation to CSSB 204(RES).

MR. GRASSER replied that the department can receive the \$18 million if it raises \$6 million in matching funds.

[1:22:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN offered her understanding that the emperor goose is a migratory species. She asked whether a raffle

recipient would be required to get a waterfowl stamp and whether that would be gifted by the state. She surmised that waterfowl hunters must have a life list like all other birders and that that is why an emperor goose could be so highly prized. She further offered her recollection that the emperor goose is a species that subsistence hunters are allowed to use and harvest in the spring. She stated she wants to understand the current consumptive use of emperor goose by Alaskans, especially if it is spring harvestable waterfowl used in rural communities.

MR. GRASSER responded that statute requires whoever is lucky enough to draw a permit - whether a goose permit, moose permit, or other permit - to follow the existing rules and regulations regarding those permitted hunts. He said [ADF&G] therefore cannot give a permit for the spring season because it not part of a general draw hunt. He explained that an amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act allows for spring harvests, which is a customary and traditional use by subsistence users.

[1:24:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN asked whether ADF&G's data on the customary and traditional spring harvest use of emperor goose shows ten, hundreds, or thousands of bags. She said she understands that ADF&G thinks at this point that emperor goose is not a species that the department is likely to offer a tag for because there is not an overabundance of the species. But, she stated, her concern is that it is a species of local consumption use for customary and traditional harvest in the spring and she wants to ensure it is protected and not risked for generating revenue.

MR. GRASSER answered that he is unsure on the exact overall take for subsistence use. However, he said, if the population objective is reached to allow for [the offering of a tag], it would primarily be on the Alaska Peninsula. According to ADF&G's data, he continued, most of the subsistence harvest of emperor geese is in Game Management Units (GMUs) 18, 19, and, he thinks, 21, but mostly around Bethel in GMU 18.

[1:26:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN submitted that any emperor geese going through GMUs 18 and 19 [in the spring] will have come across GMU 9, and then [in the fall] the remaining geese will fly southward over such places as Cold Bay where more geese will be taken. She said she is concerned about the emperor goose provision and

subsequent impacts on customary and traditional use, and she questions why adding that species is needed now.

MR. GRASSER replied that the thinking was which species could help raise money in the future because even if they are currently closed they might come open. He offered his belief that there is currently no nonresident season for emperor goose and therefore the department isn't going to offer it on permit this year. He further related that the department has already told the member groups that are applying for these permits that emperor goose is not on the table this year. Mr. Grasser stated that ADF&G has an obligation to conserve wildlife so that it is sustainable; if the population is low, the department is not going to issue a permit. For example, he continued, after a hard winter last year in the Tok management area, the department did not offer a permit for the Governor's Auction and Raffle Tag Program and cut the number of permits for Alaska residents to just 10. He said safeguards are in the bill that allow ADF&G and its biologists, especially its area biologists, to decide whether to offer a permit.

[1:29:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN stated that raffles and permits for hunts that are within Alaska's regulatory scheme don't give her heartburn. But, she continued, she has long had concerns about emperor geese and other migratory species where there are spring and fall harvests and it may not be realized until the following year that overharvest occurred. Given that there has not previously been a raffle for emperor goose and that the population is not currently healthy enough to sustain one now, she said it gives her heartburn to add this provision before there is a surplus of the species.

SENATOR REVAK responded that those concerns about wildlife conservation and sustainability are shared by himself and other volunteers in wildlife conservation organizations, and by the department. He said he is comfortable with the provision in the bill that the maximum the department can allow is four tags with one goose per tag. He stated that sustainable yield has been the primary focus in the past when numbers of game species weren't there. There needs to be a balance between the ability to fund fish and game with the game available, he continued, and that is what made him comfortable with this provision. When the time comes that the numbers exist, he added, this will bring in quite a bit of funds that will then be matched in an exponential way to fund ADF&G.

[1:33:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK pointed out that there are already great restrictions on the hunting of emperor goose. He said hunting by Alaska residents is through a registration permit and for nonresidents a permit must be drawn. He related his belief that emperor geese bypass a big part of the Interior because he has seen only one in his entire life of living there. Accessing emperor geese is tough and costly, he continued, so the pressure is not going to be there to hunt. He said he therefore doesn't see any issue with four permits to raise money to help create more birds and he thinks it's a good thing.

[1:34:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS referred to Sections 1 and 3 where the word "wildlife" would be added to the organizations that can apply for these donations. He asked whether any organization currently on the list would be excluded with this change in language and, if not, the kind of organization that would be excluded by adding the word "wildlife".

MR. GRASSER responded that regarding the organizations that have been applying right now or in the immediate past, it would keep organizations that don't spend money on wildlife conservation from applying. He noted that conservation is a broad term when it comes to sustainable yield of living renewable resources. There are conservation groups that do things other than wildlife, such as conserving waterways or forest lands, he said, and this would preclude a forestry nonprofit from applying for one of these permits.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS observed that [the groups on the list] are all consumptive use organizations. He asked whether a non-consumptive use organization could qualify for these permits with the proposed term of wildlife.

MR. GRASSER replied yes, if they are spending money on programs that support wildlife conservation or wildlife outdoor education.

[1:36:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS inquired whether conserving land and environmental concerns would be included in wildlife conservation. He further inquired whether an organization would

be excluded from applying if it is concerned about the impact on wildlife of opening lands or resource development.

MR. GRASSER answered that he will get back to the committee. He said an organization which has land and enhances habitat for species consumption would qualify for a permit. But, he advised, an organization that is going to block development of a resource like, say, a forest product or forestry project, would not qualify at that point.

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS asked whether an organization that wants to stop logging to protect wildlife would qualify for a donation.

MR. GRASSER replied that he doesn't believe it would qualify.

[1:38:21 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK asked whether he is correct in understanding that there is the possibility for receiving additional funds of up to \$18 million that the state needs to match, which is on top of the existing \$32 million that the state matches for, as well as in the short-term future there is the possibility for an additional \$30 million that the state must match, and that is what the effort of this bill is.

MR. GRASSER responded that that is right. He said that for the last several years Alaska has received around \$30 million a year in general Pittman-Robertson money. The \$18 million, he stated, is the result of higher gun and ammunition sales this last year, and it has already been apportioned to Alaska. So, he advised, a total of about \$50 million is on the table right now that Alaska needs to match. He further advised that the Recovering America's Wildlife Act is currently before Congress and would raise monies for conservation of species of greatest concern through fines on environmental violations, such as oil spills. The projected apportionment to Alaska if that bill passes, he continued, would be \$30 million, for a total of \$80 million for which Alaska will need to find a matching funds.

CHAIR PATKOTAK surmised it is a 1:1 match where the state must find a single dollar for any single dollar currently available under Pittman-Robertson, not including the pending legislation.

MR. GRASSER answered that it is a 3:1 match. He explained that if Alaska gets \$1 in license sales and puts it into the fish and

game fund, that \$1 is available to match with PR dollars, so that \$1 becomes \$4.

CHAIR PATKOTAK stated that this information suffices for the percentage breakdown on Pittman-Robertson that Representative Rauscher was seeking.

[1:41:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRONK, regarding the emperor goose, related that for a count of over 28,000 geese the quota is set at 1,000 and if the count falls to 23,000, the quota drops to 500. He said every resident hunter can shoot only one goose. If the quota is dropped to 500, he continued, then only 500 geese are available. For the nonresident draw, he stated, only 25 people draw, and they get to shoot one goose. If the count drops below 23,000, he explained, no one hunts because there is no quota for the state hunt. He said he therefore thinks the management plan is a good plan.

CHAIR PATKOTAK requested that either the sponsor's office or Mr. Grasser provide the committee with the current emperor goose management plan.

[1:42:59 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK opened public testimony on CSSB 204(RES).

[1:43:18 PM](#)

JOHN STURGEON, President, Safari Club International, Alaska Chapter (SCI-AK), testified that SCI-AK strongly supports the changes to the Governor's Auction and Raffle Tag program proposed in CSSB 204(RES). He said these changes would benefit Alaska outdoor conservation groups like SCI-AK while providing an economic boost to the Division of Wildlife Conservation and local businesses and communities. He noted that the bill does not require the department to issue these permits if there is wildlife conservation concern.

MR. STURGEON related that this year SCI-AK raffled a Chugach sheep tag, with 63 percent of the raffle tickets being sold to out-of-state residents. This is outside hunter revenue being brought into the state, he pointed out, although the winner of the raffle was an Alaska resident. This single raffle netted about \$420,000, he reported, of which about \$300,000 went to ADF&G for wildlife management and \$125,000 went to SCI-AK for

its conservation programs. Because ADF&G can leverage this money against Pittman-Robertson funds, this one raffle provided ADF&G with \$1.7 million for its management programs and SCI-AK with roughly \$300,000.

1:45:20 PM

THOR STACEY, Director of Governmental Affairs, Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), testified in support of CSSB 204(RES). He stated that the guides he represents are proud of their contribution to wildlife management in Alaska. He related that currently nonresident hunting licenses and tags account for about 83 percent of the Division of Wildlife's budget. Within that structure, he continued, APHA supports this bill as it is a good reform.

MR. STACEY related that APHA participates in the Governor's Auction and Raffle Tag program and auctions these tags as part of a package where guides have donated their services. The tags have value and the donated guide services have value, he pointed out, and that is recognized by the people who are competing for the tag. The guides, he added, are proud of that relationship between this program and the support of wildlife conservation in Alaska. Because some of the species are guide required, he noted, that is an important partnership with the hunting guides.

1:47:04 PM

MR. STACEY addressed the bill's addition of emperor goose. He said the Board of Game recently discussed emperor goose management because the population is starting to get to threshold. Within the allocation structure, he explained, most of the harvest goes to the federal program which serves federally qualified rural residents, and that harvest is about 7,000 birds per year. The state seasons, he continued, allow up to around 150 tags, which the department issues depending on the threshold, and the nonresident tags are issued through a drawing structure of up to 25 tags. So, in looking at the pie, he continued, a very small percentage of the available harvestable surplus is used by the state seasons for either Alaska residents or nonresidents. He stated that APHA is neutral on the emperor goose portion of the bill, meaning that APHA would defer to this committee, the legislature, and the department to decide if it is a good idea.

CHAIR PATKOTAK said the committee looks forward to receiving the requested follow-up documentation on the specifics of the emperor goose management plan.

[1:49:33 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK closed public testimony on CSSB 204(RES) after ascertaining that no one else wished to testify.

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that CSSB 204(RES) was held over.

HB 349-HEARING ESTABLISH DRILLING UNITS/SPACING

[1:50:00 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 349, "An Act relating to the establishment of oil and gas drilling units and patterns." [Before the committee was CSHB 349(CRA).]

[1:50:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER, prime sponsor of HB 349, recounted that the bill proposes to change the antiquated process for well spacing to a more efficient process for [today's] active drilling.

[1:51:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN moved to adopt Amendment 1 to CSHB 349(CRA), labeled 32-LS1542\B.1, Nauman, 4/28/22, which read:

Page 1, line 1, following "**units**":
Insert "**, spacing,**"

Page 2, line 12:
Delete "in a pool without a drilling unit or units established under this section"

[1:51:17 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK objected for discussion purposes.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN explained that Amendment 1 would delete the final clause in the sentence on page 2, line 12. She recounted that the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee amended the bill to include an explicit protection of

correlative rights and suggested draft language from both the AOGCC and Legislative Legal Services. However, she noted, [CSHB 394(CRA) appears to read that correlative rights cannot be protected unless there is a defined pool already established. If that final clause is deleted, she stated, the language would say, "The commission may adopt well spacing regulation to protect correlative rights." She explained that correlative rights are when there are different lease holders adjoining a section line and once a pool has been defined it becomes clear. She said the amendment makes it cleaner and makes the intent clear that correlative rights should always be protected regardless of whether the pool is defined.

[1:52:44 PM](#)

CHAIR PATKOTAK removed his objection to Amendment 1.

[1:52:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER objected. He offered his appreciation for Amendment 1 and said he considers it a helpful friendly amendment.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER removed his objection to Amendment 1. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

CHAIR PATKOTAK noted that Representative Fields had questions during the bill's first hearing. He said he presumes the department followed up with specifics and that Representative Fields' questions were answered.

[1:53:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER stated that this legislation is needed, and the industry looks forward to its passage because it will improve the turnaround time for permitting.

[1:54:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOPKINS moved to report CSHB 349(CRA), as amended, with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 349(RES) was reported out of the House Resources Standing Committee.

CHAIR PATKOTAK stated that Legislative Legal Services is able make any needed conforming or technical changes to the bill.

1:55:33 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.