

HB

567

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

JAY S. HAMMOND, GOVERNOR

*Bill
HB 567*

SUBPORT BUILDING
JUNEAU 99801

March 31, 1976

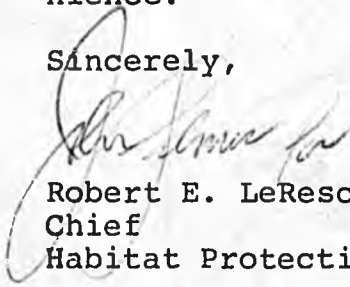
The Honorable Nels Anderson
Chairman, House Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Following our discussion at your committee, I have drafted the attached resolution, which your committee may wish to consider for protection of the calving grounds of the Arctic caribou herd. As we discussed, because the land in question is part of Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4, this resolution might carry as much weight as official designation of the area as Critical Habitat. I am sure we all agree that it is extremely important to protect the most critical area used annually by the Arctic caribou herd, and I hope this resolution provides the cleanest, most efficient way to do this.

I would be happy to discuss this with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,


Robert E. LeResche
Chief
Habitat Protection Section

cc: J. Brooks

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

RESOLUTION URGING FEDERAL AGENCIES TO TAKE SPECIAL CARE OF THE ARCTIC CARIBOU HERD CALVING GROUNDS.

WHEREAS, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is the largest caribou herd in Alaska;

WHEREAS, this caribou herd is an extremely important resource to the people of Alaska for subsistence and other purposes;

WHEREAS, the calving grounds of a caribou herd are the most important and irreplaceable habitat used by the herd, and are essential to the herds existance;

WHEREAS, increased exploration of Naval Petroleum Reserve number 4 presents a potential threat to this critical habitat, if full cognizance is not taken of the needs of the caribou and their habitat;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Department of Defense and the Department of Interior to take special care to assure that lands comprising the calving grounds of the Arctic caribou herd are properly protected during any exploration or development of NPR 4 and, further, that these federal agencies assure that any operations occuring in this calving ground area are fully reviewed by and coordinated with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and any concerned local governments.

CHAIRMAN:
NELS A. ANDERSON, JR.

STAFF ASSISTANT:
GUY VANDOREN

POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811



VICE CHAIRMAN:
TED SMITH

SECRETARY:
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
Ruth I. Allington
PHONE: 465-3715
465-3781

House Resource Committee

FRED BROWN

ALVIN OSTERBACK

DICK ELIASON

LEO RHODE

MIKE HERSHBERGER

LESLIE (RED) SWANSON

JAMES HUNTINGTON

February 20, 1976

HB 567

Terrence J. Woods
LCDR, JAGC, USN
Naval Petroleum Reserve #4
Suite 600
3201 C St.
Anchorage, Ak. 99503

Dear Sir:

I appreciate your kind offer to appear before the committee to share your experience and knowledge of the area. Should we decide to pursue hearings on the issue we will certainly keep your offer to testify in mind.

Very Sincerely,

Nels A. Anderson, Jr.
NAA/ra



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICER IN CHARGE
NAVAL PETROLEUM RESERVE NO. 4
SUITE 600
THE CALAIS OFFICE CENTER
3201 "C" STREET
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503

NPR-4-B:k
6240.10
Ser: 226
13 Feb 1976

Honorable Nels Anderson, Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
State House of Representatives
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Anderson:

This office recently has become aware of House Bill No. 567, which would designate approximately 6300 square miles, or about 17.0 percent, of Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 as a "critical habitat" area for the protection of caribou.

The Navy is very much interested in this Bill and in the welfare of the Western Arctic caribou herd that frequents the referenced area on NPR-4 for several weeks each year, using it as one of their main calving grounds. The Navy also has had considerable experience in that particular area, having drilled several wells there during the earlier oil exploration program from 1944 to 1953. During that period, there are no known incidents of the caribou having been disturbed by the exploratory program.

It is believed that no one is better able to discuss the Navy's proposed oil exploration/inventorying program on NPR-4 than the Navy. Thus, if it would be of assistance to the Natural Resources Committee, we would be most appreciative of the opportunity to appear before the Committee, at your convenience, to discuss the Navy's program, to share with you the experience that we have gained in the area, and to answer any questions that the Committee may wish to direct.

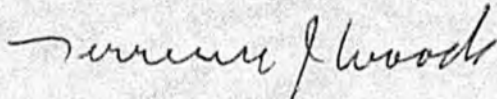
Dr. Max C. Brewer is the Chief Scientist and Environmental Consultant for the Navy in regard to operations on NPR-4. Although not a biologist by training, he has obtained considerable information regarding the caribou populations on the North Slope during his 21 years in residence there; first as a scientist and later as Director of the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory. He also has indicated that he wished to present testimony concerning House Bill 567.

Pg. 2 - February 1976
Hon. Nels Anderson

Under separate cover I am forwarding a copy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for Zone "A" of NPR-4. Caribou are discussed on pp. 133-138 of the Statement and in Appendix "A", pp. A-31/32, of the Statement. A draft environmental impact statement, covering the exploratory/inventory program proposed for the entire area of NPR-4, is now in preparation and should be completed by October 1976. It will contain a much more detailed discussion of the caribou populations on the North Slope.

I believe that you will find that the Navy is quite knowledgeable concerning the caribou population, and those of other species of wildlife, on the North Slope. I think that you also will find that the Navy is approaching its exploratory program on NPR-4 in a very responsible manner.

Respectfully yours,



Terrence J. Woods
LCDR, JAGC, USN
Officer in Charge

R. R. #4, Box 4980
Juneau, Alaska 99803
12 February 1976

Honorable Nels A. Anderson, Jr., Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
State House of Representatives
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Anderson:

While in Anchorage recently I became aware of House Bill No. 567, which would designate approximately 6300 square miles, or just over four million acres, of Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 as a "critical habitat" for the protection of caribou during the calving season.

I do not believe this Bill to be in the best interests of the State of Alaska, or of the Native residents in northwestern Alaska, or to be in the best interests of the caribou-wolf relationship in northern Alaska. It certainly would do nothing to advance what we might hope would someday evolve into an enlightened national energy policy.

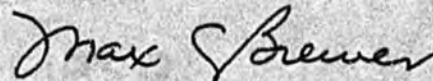
Instead of fostering a program of good game management in the referenced area, the Bill appears to be a "cop-out" on the part of management, and the first step in an effort to officially set up another vast wilderness block of land. It also overlooks the fact that the caribou, wolves and the Natives co-existed in harmony when the Navy drilled several wells in the proposed "critical habitat" area in the early 1950's. Another flaw in the Bill is that it is attuned more to political boundaries, i.e., PET-4 rather than to the areas used by the caribou. This approach would seem to do violence to the concept of "habitat protection".

It was only in the late 1950's, when the Fish and Wildlife Service predator control program slaughtered many of the wolves in that area, that we started to run into trouble. The caribou population jumped rapidly, the incidence of brucellosis zoomed to a reported 18 percent in one study, and the caribou began to overgraze some of their range. This apparently caused the recent report about a drop in the caribou population and the suggestion for another program to either eliminate wolves, or to cut subsistence hunting in the area; again upsetting the natural balance of nature.

12 February 1976

I think that H. B. 567 needs to undergo some very close and detailed scrutiny, particularly since it offers some very close parallels with the problems encountered with management on Nunivak Island. Should you believe that my observations over the years on the North Slope could be helpful, I would be most happy to testify and to provide the Committee with the information that I have been able to collect.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Max C. Brewer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Max C. Brewer

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

BRENDA T. ITTA
BARROW, ALASKA 99723

POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811

Phone: 465-4923

January 21, 1976

Mayor Eben Hobson
North Slope Borough
Barrow, Alaska 99723

Dear Eben:

Enclosed is a copy of Hous. Bill 567 introduced by the Rules Committee by request of the Governor, referred to House Resources and Finance, creating the Arctic Caribou Herd Calving Grounds. Also attached is Governor Hammond's transmittal letter on this bill.

I hereby solicit your comments and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Brenda T. Itta

Enclosures:

cc: Mr. Jacob Adams with enclosures

BTI:rh

DISTRICT 21

AMBLER

ANAKTUVUK PASS

ATKASOOK

BARROW

BARTER ISLAND

BORNITE-KOBUK

BROWERVILLE

KIANA

KIVALINA

KOTZEBUE

NOATAK

NOOR'IK

NUIQSUT

POINT HOPE

POINT LAY

SHUNGNAK

WAINWRIGHT

MAYOR'S OFFICE
PH. 852-4865

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE
PH. 852-6890

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
PH. 852-4845

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
PH. 852-6250

ACCOUNTING
PH. 852-5800

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH

P. O. BOX 546
BARROW, ALASKA 99723

ASSESSING
PH. 852-5030

TREASURY
PH. 852-8310

HOUSING AGENCY
PH. 852-5375

HEALTH AGENCY
PH. 852-7635

January 30, 1976

Representative Brenda T. Itta
House of Representatives
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Re: House Bill No. 567

Dear Brenda:

Thank you for making available to me the referenced proposed legislation.

After considerable review of AS Title 16, Article 5 Fish & Game Critical Habitat Areas, I find that, in the interest of the citizens of both the North Slope and particularly the State, I must oppose the proposed legislation at this time.

I would like to make it explicitly clear that I am not averse to preserving habitat areas crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife: as you well know (and I trust you will convey this to the House Resources and Finance Committee), continued occupation of the Arctic has been based on the harvest of renewable resources. It has, therefore, been in our best interests to insure the perpetuation of such resources.

The North Slope Borough, primarily in response to impending developments within its boundaries and off its coasts, will be increasingly engaged in the assessment of its natural resources to determine which protective measures should be taken.

My specific objection to the proposed amendment is that it would give the State Board under Sec. 16.20.240 the authority to promulgate regulations governing the taking of fish and game - in this instance, caribou - within the cited areas. In my estimation, it would be premature to assume that the Department of Fish and Game can, at this time, realistically impose regulations without an adequate basis of knowledge of the distribution, migration paths, current usage or magnitude of the Arctic caribou herds. Although there have been studies in the past, it is well known that additional research is necessary to properly delineate contemporary caribou population and their current utilization. This necessary research is especially evident after the aborted caribou migration through Anaktuvuk Pass this past fall and early winter. The residents of Anaktuvuk Pass attribute this to the numerous sports hunters who flew into Anaktuvuk whose activities at the northern end of the pass diverted the migration. Also, there is evidence to suggest that the pipeline corridor was an easier migration route for the caribou to follow. It would be interesting, too, to know why (if,

Rep. Brenda Itta
January 30, 1976
Page 2.

in fact, the intent of the amendment is solely to protect caribou calving grounds) the Porcupine calving grounds are not mentioned.

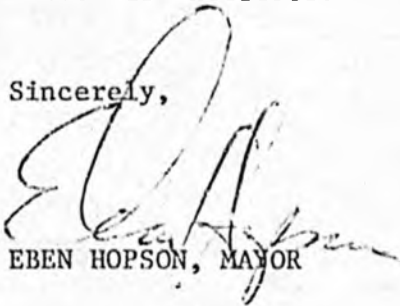
These are considerations which must be determined before any regulations are implemented.

It has not been demonstrated that establishment of the proposed areas in HB 567 as "critical habitat" areas is warranted or will accomplish the purported objectives of preserving the viability of the Arctic caribou herds.

I am quite certain that the Legislature and Governor will agree that laws cannot be indiscriminately applied without the recognition of the necessity of such legislation or an adequate basis of knowledge.

The North Slope Borough would be most anxious to discuss with State Fish and Game our mutual concerns. I do not believe the proposed amendment will serve our interests.

Sincerely,



EBEN HOPSON, MAYOR

c.c. Jacob Adams

NANA REGIONAL CORPORATION, INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 49 / KOTZEBUE, ALASKA 99752 / TELEPHONE (907) 442-3261

January 19, 1976



NANA
76-008

Mr. James W. Brooks
Dept. of Fish & Game
Support Bldg.
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Sir:

The Department of Fish & Game has released figures which indicate that the Arctic Caribou Herd has decreased to a count of 100,000 from a 1971 estimated high of 241,000. We do not believe that this latest estimate is accurate as our people report that there are more caribou now than ever before.

Unfortunately, the staff of DF&G released information to the news media and magazine writers which placed the blame for the decrease on the Native Subsistence Hunter. This effort to discredit our people will receive the support of non-hunters across the United States which will cause political pressure to be placed on your board.

In an effort to assist you in arriving at reasonable regulations are opposed to reacting to outside pressures, we have held a series of meetings in each of the NANA Region Villages where caribou hunting regulations were discussed. Total agreement between all villages was not obtained on all proposed regulations. Following are the proposed regulations:

1. Impose a daily bag limit of five caribou per hunter. This will insure that all caribou caught will be removed from the range leaving nothing for preservationists to photograph and complain about. All villages agreed to this limit.
2. Impose a annual limit of twenty-five caribou per hunter. This should be sufficient for the larger families in villages that depend almost entirely on caribou for food. Two of our eleven villages disagreed with this limit and felt that no limit should be placed at this time.



Member Villages: Ambler, Buckland, Candlo, Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kobuk, Kotzebue, Noatak, Noorvik, Selawik, Shungnak

January 19, 1976

3. Authorize aerial wolf hunting. The wolf population has increased tremendously since this was stopped. Packs of 30 or more have been sighted. Last spring three wolves killed thirty fawns in one evening. Two villages disagreed with this provision.

4. Stop Sports Hunting. As subsistence hunting is the most important use of the caribou and we are proposing that it be limited, the least important use should be stopped.

5. Commercial Hunting should be limited or stopped if necessary. Barter should continue to be allowed as it is the only way people who cannot hunt receive their meat supply.

We feel that the regulations proposed are stringent enough to protect the Arctic Caribou Herd while efforts are made by DF&G to gather more meaningful data on the herd than they have so far. Unfounded allegations against the Native Subsistence Hunter only causes hard feelings and widens the rift between the hunter and the game manager who should be working together.

I hope that you will give serious consideration to our proposal. It was developed through discussions in public meetings by many people. It also cost us about \$5,000 in staff time and aircraft charters. We hope that we can continue to provide this bond between your Board and our subsistence hunters in the future to ensure that those of us who are vitally concerned with the sustained growth of Alaska's game resources can continue to work together.

Sincerely yours,

NANA REGIONAL CORPORATION, INC.

John W. Schaeffer
President

JWS/dcs

cc: NANA Board
Governor Hammond
Commissioner Brooks
Senator Ferguson
✓Rep. Itta
Carl Gravogal, DF&G
Bob Hinman, DF&G, Fairbanks