

HB

181

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: GEHE ANNAS

TITLE:

ADDRESS: 424 N ALASKA ST

CITY: PALMER

ZIP: 99645

PHONE: 745-3440

BILL NO: HB 181

SUBJECT: HARMOT DAY

MESSAGE: I FEEL THAT HB 181 IS ACTUALLY A DO-NOTHING BILL. FUNDAMENTALLY
HB 181 IS THE TYPE OF LEGISLATION WHICH SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN PUT IN
PRINT. I DO HOPE THIS BILL WILL BE STOPPED IN THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE.

PONID: 14160916

DATE: 03/23/87

TIME: 16:09:16

LIONAME: MAT-SU LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES

NEWARD

BOUCHER

DAVIDSON

DONLEY

HOFFMAN

MARTIN

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ULMER

NAME: GENE ANNAS
TITLE:
ADDRESS: 424 N ALASKA ST
CITY: PALMER ZIP: 99645
PHONE: 745-3440
BILL NO: HB 181
SUBJECT: MARMOT DAY
MESSAGE: I AM VERY MUCH OPPOSED TO HB 181 AS I FEEL IT IS AN EXTREMELY
BAD PIECE OF LEGISLATION. HB 181 WAS INTRODUCED BY
REPRESENTATIVE MENARD PRIMARILY TO GET PRESS COVERAGE.

POMID: 14154325
DATE: 03/23/87
TIME: 15:43:25
LIONAME: MAT-SU LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES

BOUCHER
DAVIDSON
DONLEY
HOFFMAN
MARTIN
MENARD

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date referred: 3/13/87

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Resources
Judiciary
Finance

DATE: 3-23-87

The State Affairs Committee has considered HB 181

"An Act establishing Marmot Day and designating the official state marmot."

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with _____ the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published _____
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published _____
- zero with analysis

SIGNING DO PASS:

[Handwritten signatures]

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

[Handwritten signature] Do Not Pass

[Handwritten signature]

 Chairman's signature



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

House

STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 181

FILE CONTENTS

Pouch V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

1. HB 181: AN ACT ESTABLISHING MARMOT DAY AND DESIGNATING THE OFFICIAL STATE MARMOT
2. SPONSOR BACKUP

FISCAL NOTE

A. ALL AGENCIES: -0-

Curt Menard

301 W. Swanson Ave.
Wasilla, Alaska 99687

Or
P.O. Box V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

376-5315 Work
745-8122 Work
376-5855 Home
465-2679 Juneau



2



ALASKA MARMOT DAY

Through the long days of winter when thoughts turn to the coming of spring, let's say around February 2, Americans turn to the venerable weatherman, the groundhog, to share his insights on winter and spring.

And that means that here in the Great Land, Alaskans have long had to rely on Outsiders to forecast our climactic future.

Since we are different, since we are unique, for Alaskan winters we need our own local prognosticator -- ladies and gentlemen, we need our own Marmot Day.

Who could be better qualified to advise Alaskans on lengthy winters but our own native hoary marmot?

While it is true a few carpetbagging groundhogs have jumped the border and come in around Northway -- We should endorse our own Alaskan weatherman,

and for that, I respectfully suggest, the Hoary Marmot who ranges from Ketchikan to Anaktuvuk Pass, who with his cousin the Arctic Marmot, covers virtually the entire State of Alaska, is best suited.

In Alaska we should recognize February 2 as Marmot Day, not continue to go gawking at some Lower 48 Groundhogs; We need to promote our Alaska Hire Policy right down to the last Marmot!

Ladies and Gentlemen-- I propose that the senior hoary marmot housed at the Alaska Zoo be recognized as the official state marmot.

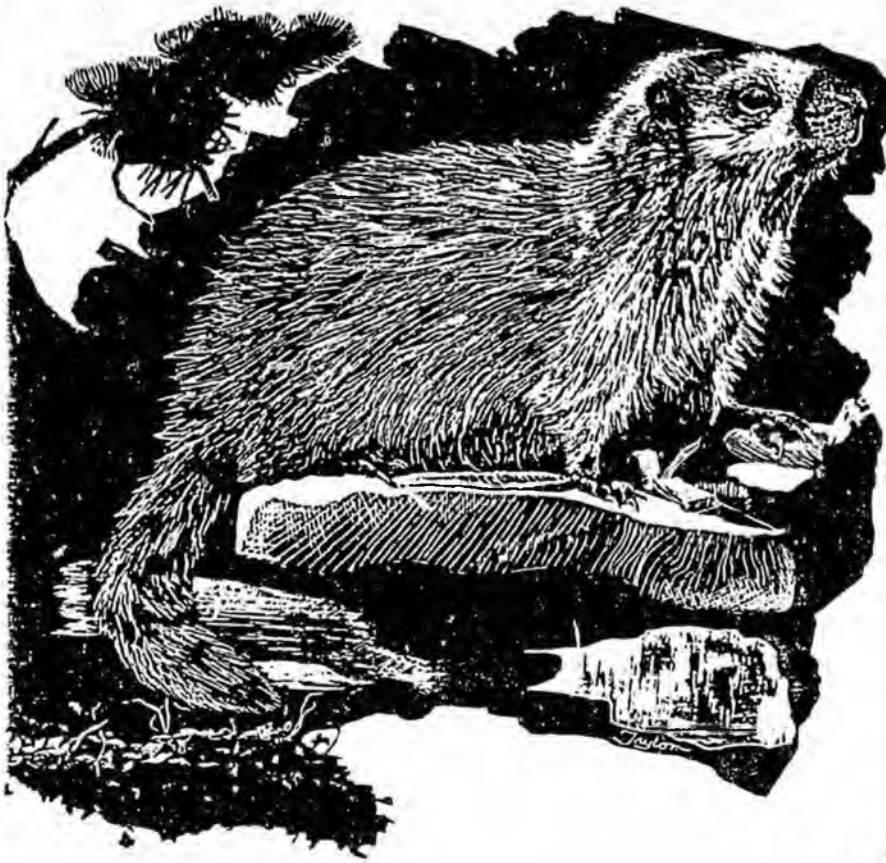
Just think of the publicity for our good Zoo, think of Alaskan schoolchildren honoring February 2 as Marmot Day, and think of the evening news as Alaskans everywhere wait on the judgement of our own venerable senior hoary marmot.

For all these reasons and more, I urge your support and swift consideration to establish Alaska Marmot Day. Thank you.

Warm Regards,

Curt Menard
Representative

The **MARMOT** in Alaska



Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Notebook Series

The hoary marmot (*Marmota caligata*), the Alaska marmot (*Marmota broweri*), and the woodchuck (*Marmota monax*) are the three species of marmots that live in Alaska. The hoary marmot can be found at the bases of active talus slopes in the mountains of central, southeastern, and southwestern Alaska. It also occurs down to sea level along some areas of the coast. The Alaska marmot lives in similar talus habitat throughout much of the Brooks Range, and the woodchuck digs its dens in loess (wind-deposited) soils along river valleys in the dry lowlands of eastcentral Alaska.

General Description: Large relatives of the squirrel, the hoary and closely related Alaska marmots occurring in the State weigh 10 pounds or more and may exceed 24 inches in total length. The woodchuck weighs between 2 and 6 pounds and can measure up to 20 inches long. The animals attain their maximum weight in late summer, when they accumulate thick layers of fat which will sustain them through winter hibernation. Body shape is similar in all three species: head short and broad, legs short, ears small, body thickset, tail densely furred, and front paws clawed for digging burrows. Hoary and Alaska marmots are predominantly gray, with a darker lower back and face and a dark, reddish tail. The hoary marmot has a white patch above its nose and usually has dark brown feet, giving it the Latin name *caligata*, meaning "booted." The Alaska marmot does not have a white face patch, its feet may be light or dark, and its fur is much softer than the stiff fur of the hoary marmot. A uniform reddish brown, the woodchuck has an unmarked brown face. The name woodchuck originated as "wuchuk," a Cree Indian word used to describe a number of similar-sized animals, and does not describe characteristics of the woodchuck's behavior or habitat preference.

History: In Alaska, all marmots mate in April or May. About a month later, two to six young are born hairless and blind. The young disperse 2 months after birth and may breed for the first time when they are 2 or 3 years old. Marmots may live to be 5 years old or more. They feed on grasses, flowering plants, berries, roots, mosses, and lichens.

Hoary and Alaska marmots make their summer homes on the bases of active talus slopes, where the rocks protect them from predators and provide lookout stations. Woodchuck dens may be up to 30 feet long, are dug in the loess soils of river valleys in Interior Alaska, and end with a chamber containing a large grass nest. Most marmot dens have a main entrance with a mound of dirt near the hole and a number of concealed entrances. Marmots are social animals. Although each family has a separate burrow, these burrows are located near each other, forming a colony.

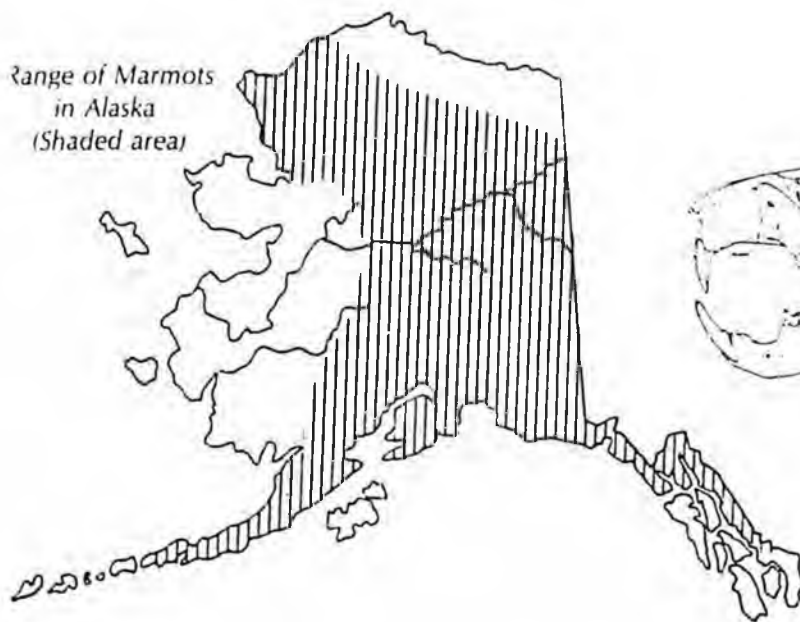
True hibernators, marmots enter a state of torpor in winter, all bodily functions are reduced. Hoary marmots and woodchucks hibernate alone in the same burrow in which they spend the summer. To protect themselves from the cold, they plug the tunnel leading to the nest chamber with a dirt, vegetation, and feces mixture. They emerge from their winter hibernation in April or early May to find food and mates. Adapted to the harsher winter climate of the Brooks Range, Alaska marmots create a special winter den, which has a single entrance and is characteristically located on an exposed ridge that becomes snow-free early in spring. The entrance is plugged after all colony members are inside, and no animals can leave until the plug thaws in early May. Consequently, Alaska marmots mate before they emerge from their winter den. These winter dens are relatively permanent for each colony, and some are used for more than 20 years. Because hibernation begins in September, most marmots in Alaska spend two-thirds of each year locked in their winter dens.

Marmots are most active in early morning and late afternoon, although they may leave their burrows during other daylight hours. Marmots need wind to control mosquito levels and rarely venture out on calm days. The Alaska marmot marks its territory by rubbing secretions from its face glands on rocks and along trails. The hoary marmot probably marks its territory in the same way.

The pelt colors of marmots help them blend with the lichen-covered rocks or rusty-brown soil of their surroundings. Nevertheless, marmots remain very wary and alert for predators including eagles, foxes, coyotes, wolves, and bears. When the Alaska marmot is alarmed, it produces a slurred, low-pitched warning call. The alarm call of both hoary marmot and the woodchuck is a loud whistle. They also hiss, squeal, growl, and yip. In areas where marmots are hunted by humans, they have learned to remain quiet when humans approach. Good climbers and swimmers, woodchucks may also take to trees or water to avoid predators.

Marmots often secondarily benefit other animals and plants. Abandoned marmot holes can become homes for small mammals. In moderation, their digging and defecation loosen, aerate, and improve the soil. Alaska Natives have long relished marmot meat and have used its thick coat for warm clothing. Although these wary animals are difficult to approach closely, persistent observers are rewarded by the fascinating sight of a marmot community.

Catherine Curby
1982





Alaska's marmot. Welcome home. (Marmot photo)

Page 8 The Anchorage Daily News, Friday, March 13, 1987

Menard opts for marmot day

BY ERIC TROYER
ANCHORAGE — The Alaska legislature is expected to pass a bill Wednesday that would change Feb. 2 from Groundhog Day to Marmot Day.
 "We need to recognize Alaska's marmot," said Rep. Ken Menard, D-Anchorage, who introduced the bill. "It's a symbol of Alaska and we should honor it." Menard said the bill will be passed by the House in March and then by the Senate in February. The bill would change the name of the day from Groundhog Day to Marmot Day.

gawking at some Lower 48 groundhog."
 In his speech, Menard pointed out that the senior senator, Sen. Frank Miller, D-Anchorage, is recognized as the official state marmot.
 The marmot would have the same status as the groundhog. It is seen on Feb. 2 when he draws his head out of his hole on Feb. 2, and there will be six more weeks of winter, a not as long as the groundhog's.
 Menard is introducing the bill to honor a symbol of Alaska. It is an act of recognition of the marmot's role in the region's history because of its hibernation.

something on the lighter side you go crazy," he said.
 Menard said he asked Rep. Dave Donley (D-Anchorage) who has introduced a local fire bill, if he would like to co-sponsor the marmot bill. Donley declined, but did say he would vote for the bill.
 Other legislators have had mixed reactions to the bill, Menard said.
 "Some of 'em loved it, some of 'em said you're just kidding," Menard said.
 But the bill is for tea and it will pass, another Alaska bill will be filed for next year. At least for one day.



I LIKE CURT



A

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Bill Version: HB 181
Publish Date: _____

REQUEST _____

Revision Date: March 19, 1987
Title: Marmot Day

Agency Affected: ALL
BRU: _____

Sponsor: Menard
Requestor: House State Affairs

Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
OPERATING						
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: Attach a separate page if necessary

This bill will not cost the executive branch any additional money.

Prepared By: Michael P. McMullen *Michael P. McMullen* Phone: 465-2200
Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 5/10/87
Approved by Commissioner: Garrey Peska *Garrey Peska* Date: 3/20/87
Agency: Department of Administration

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