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SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR SENATE BILL 325

An Act relating to taking of antlerless moose

Senate Bill 325 was introduced by request to repeal AS 16.05.780 relating to prohibitions on the taking of antlerless moose.

State statute prohibits the taking of antlerless moose except that antlerless moose may be taken only under regulations adopted by the Board of Game. Each year the Board of Game must reauthorize hunts for antlerless moose in every game management unit where the hunt may take place. Prior to allowing for the taking of antlerless moose in a specific year, ADF&G must recommend the season in specified game management units or subunits or a portion of a unit or subunit be opened that year, based on biological evidence.

Before the Board may act on the taking of antlerless moose in a specific area, a majority of active local advisory committees for that unit or subunit must have recommended an opening for that year. A majority of the members of each of the committees must have voted in the affirmative. Proposals must then be submitted every year in order for the BOG to authorize an antlerless moose hunt. If an advisory committee does not meet and does not vote on such a hunt, they are out of luck until the following year.

There was a specific problem at the last Board of Game meeting dealing with antlerless moose when several advisory committees did not meet, so the board members could not concur with the continuation of the hunt. As a result the Department of Fish and Game had to cancel the cow moose hunt.

SB 325 would repeal the statutory requirement that every antlerless moose hunt be reviewed by the Board of Game every year. With passage of this legislation, advisory committees would still be allowed to make recommendations to the Board of Game regarding these hunts, working through the regulatory process every two years. In the meantime, if there is a specific biological problem, it can be addressed by the advisory committee or the Department of Fish and Game. The department also still has Emergency Order authority if it appears any of the resources is facing a biological problem.

Repeal of the statute would leave the regulation of antlerless moose hunts in the hands of the Board of Game. It would also provide a saving of resources in terms of time and funds spent on reauthorizing these hunts every year.

Unit 1(D)

Oct. 1-Oct. 15
(Subsistence hunt only)

No open season

1 bull with spike-fork antlers or 50-inch antlers or antlers with 3 or more brow tines on one side by Tier II subsistence hunting permit only; up to 200 permits may be issued

PROBLEM: This status quo proposal is necessary to accommodate cow moose hunting in Berners Bay. The strategic moose management plan for Berners Bay calls for a post-hunt moose population of 90 moose. Fall 1992 surveys enumerated 83 moose, indicating that as many as 150 moose may be present in the hunt area. The bull to cow ratio (23:100) from that survey indicated that the cow segment of the population can and should be harvested to curtail population growth. The calf to cow ratio in that survey was 13:100, lower than the 25:100 called for in the plan. All hunters (eight bulls and seven cows) were successful in the 1993 hunt. The moose plan calls for 30 hunter-days and 10 hunters; fall of 1993 saw 15 hunters expend 36 hunter days, thus exceeding these objectives.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? The population will continue to grow and could exceed carrying capacity of the habitat. The harvest of moose in Berners Bay will be restricted to bulls.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Hunters will have more opportunity to hunt moose. The moose population will benefit from either-sex harvests that will balance the herd.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? No one.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED: None.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-94-G-144)

PROPOSAL 35 - 5 AAC 85.045(4). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Reauthorizes antlerless moose season in Unit 6(A), west of Suckling Hills.

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
Unit 6(A), that portion west of Suckling Hills	Sept. 1-Oct. 5 (General hunt only)	Sept. 1-Oct. 5

1 moose by permit only; up to 30 antlered moose may be taken

by registration permit only
and up to 30 drawing permits
will be issued for antlerless
moose

PROBLEM: Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. Continuation of an antlerless season is recommended to promote population stability. The desirable post-hunt population is 250-350. A census during December 1992 estimated 295 moose, with 36 calves (12%). Reported harvest during fall 1993 was 21 antlered and 5 antlerless moose. Prior to 1992, we felt the moose population was too high in relation to the amount of food available. Estimates of total numbers ranged up to 480. Either sex harvests of 55, 89 and 80 during 1990-92 were encouraged to reduce the population to its current size. Maintaining numbers within the desirable range will likely require continued harvest of antlerless moose.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Hunting opportunity will be lost. Desired winter population size may be exceeded, resulting in damage to the winter range.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Individuals who hunt antlerless moose in Unit 6(A), west of Suckling Hills.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? People who are opposed to antlerless moose hunting.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? None.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-94-G-112)

PROPOSAL 36 - 5 AAC 85.045(4). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE. Reauthorizes and shortens the antlerless moose season in the remainder of Unit 6(A).

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
Remainder of Unit 6(A)	Sept. 1-Dec. 31 (General Hunt only)	Sept. 1-Dec. 31

1 moose; however, antlerless
moose may be taken only from
Nov. 15-Dec. 31

PROBLEM: Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. A shortened antlerless season for 1994 is recommended. Over the past 3 years, harvest reduced the population to a desired post-hunt level of 300-400. Antlerless take should continue, but at a reduced level.

to help stabilize numbers. A census during January 1993 indicated a population of 416 moose, with 32 calves (8%). Post-hunt population in 1993 was probably 380. Estimates of total numbers prior to 1993 ranged up to 515. Reported harvest of antlered and antlerless moose during 1990-1993 was 25 and 8, 35 and 16, and 40 and 24 (preliminary).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IS NOTHING IS DONE? The population will not stabilize at the desired level, and hunting opportunity will be lost.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? People who favor stabilizing the population to provide maximum hunting opportunity.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? Individuals who are opposed to antlerless moose hunting.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Closure of the antlerless season.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-94-G-111)

PROPOSAL 37 - 5 AAC 85.045(4). HUNTING SEASONS AND BAG LIMITS FOR MOOSE.
 Reauthorizes the antlerless moose season in Unit 6(B).

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
Unit 6(B)	Aug. 27-Sept. 30 (General hunt only)	No open season
1 moose by permit only; up to 30 antlered moose may be taken by registration permit only and up to 30 drawing permits will be issued for antlerless moose.		

PROBLEM: Antlerless moose seasons must be reauthorized annually. Continuation of an antlerless season is recommended to promote population stability. The desirable post-hunt population is 300-400. Censuses during January and December 1992 estimated 311 and 327 moose, with 51 (16%) and 57 (17%) calves. Reported harvest of antlered and antlerless moose during 1992-93 was 28 and 13, and 27 and 16. Minimum bull/cow ratio during December 1992 was likely 19:100.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Hunting opportunity will be lost. Desired winter population size may be exceeded, resulting in damage to the winter range.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Individuals who hunt antlerless moose in Unit 6(B).

Alaska's Game Management Units

Spring 94 BCG meeting
(Antelope Moose Proposals)

6A	14A
6B	16B
6C	19A
7	19D
9C	21D
13A	21E
13B	22A
13C	22B
13D	22D
13E	22E
14A	23
14B	24
14C	26A

