

SB

329



Alaska State Legislature

Senator Con Bunde  
Senate District P

Vice Chair: Senate Finance Committee  
Chair: Senate Labor & Commerce Committee  
Member: Legislative Budget & Audit Committee

## Sponsor Statement

### CS SB 329 (RES)

#### “An Act relating to control of nuisance moose.”

Moose are a highly valued asset of the State of Alaska and to all Alaskans. Preventing the unnecessary loss of moose to vehicle accidents should be a priority of the State. Protecting the public safety and managing moose for sustained yield for all Alaskans are responsibilities of the Legislature.

Unfortunately, in the more urban areas of the state, their interactions with humans pose a significant risk to the health and safety of both moose and humans. Six hundred moose and two to three people are killed each year in moose/vehicle collisions. Each collision costs \$15,000 in substantial vehicle repair costs, costing Alaskans \$9 million each year, not counting loss of wages, increased insurance premiums, or medical costs.

Yet, in rural areas where moose are vital to the subsistence lifestyle, the lack of moose has negatively impacted many who live in rural villages.

CS SB 329 (RES) adds a new section to AS 16.05 in order to assure maximum possible translocation of nuisance moose from urban areas of the state to suitable rural areas.

- Instructs the Department of Fish and Game to avoid destruction of nuisance moose if the moose can be relocated to a suitable rural habitat.
- Allows the department to authorize one or more private individuals or groups to relocate nuisance moose to suitable habitat if the commissioner finds that the individual or group is qualified to relocate the moose without undue danger to the public, themselves, or the moose.
- The group relocating the moose shall cover the costs of relocation.
- The state is protected against liability arising from actions taken by the group.

CS SB 329 is supported by the Alaska Moose Federation, the Department of Fish & Game, the Alaska Board of Game, the Anchorage Police Department, the Anchorage School District, the City of Wasilla, and the Central Kuskokwim Fish and Game Advisory Committee, to name just a few.

I respectfully request your support.

**Subject: SB329****Date:** Fri, 16 Apr 2004 11:01:44 -0800**From:** "John Schoen" <[jschoen@alaska.net](mailto:jschoen@alaska.net)>**Reply-To:** <[jschoen@audubon.org](mailto:jschoen@audubon.org)>**To:** <[Representative\\_Nancy\\_Dahlstrom@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Nancy_Dahlstrom@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
<[Representative\\_Beverly\\_Masck@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Beverly_Masck@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
<[Representative\\_Cheryll\\_Heinze@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Cheryll_Heinze@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
<[Representative\\_Carl\\_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Carl_Gatto@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
<[Representative\\_Bob\\_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
<[Representative\\_Nick\\_Stepovich@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Nick_Stepovich@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
<[Representative\\_Kelly\\_Wolf@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Kelly_Wolf@legis.state.ak.us)>,  
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<[RepresentativeDavid\\_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:RepresentativeDavid_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us)>

Dear Members of the House Resources Committee:

I appreciate and applaud the intent of SB 329, the control of nuisance moose bill. The goal of the bill is on target. However, the logistics and implementation of the legislation is very problematical. I spent 20 years working for ADF&G and have immobilized and handled many large mammals. The drug of choice for moose (carfentanil) is very dangerous to humans and must be handled by experts. Only a licensed ADF&G staff or veterinarian can acquire this scheduled drug and great care must be taken in handling it. Transporting adult moose any distance also requires significant care, expertise, time and money. To move moose to the Nelchina or McGrath for example, would require substantial resources and time. The expense and cost effectiveness of this program, in my view, makes the probability of long-term success for this program very low. As much as we would all like to find a quick and easy fix for reducing moose problems in Anchorage and augmenting populations in bush communities, I don't think this project has much prospect for success. It would probably be more cost effective to ship the processed meat from nuisance kills and vehicle collisions to the bush than trying to transport live animals.

Again, I appreciate the intent of this bill, but its long-term effectiveness needs close review.

Thanks for considering my comments.



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APR 21 2004

April 21, 2004

Members of the House Resources Committee,

In addition to the points I have previously raised in opposition to SB 329, the Nuisance Moose Bill, there are several other serious problems that have recently emerged in discussions of this bill. These apply to problems at both ends of the moose transplant--capture, holding, and transport of moose in Anchorage, and stocking moose in distant areas away from Anchorage.

SB 329 lacks detail on specific objectives and goals of the Moose Federation's plan. The Federation has sold their concept on the basis that there will be reduced accidents and injuries caused by moose if the moose capture plan is implemented. But Anchorage residents have no information on the scope and duration of the plan. Will dozens or hundreds of moose be captured, where in Anchorage will captures occur, when will moose be captured, and what are the associated risks and problems? Lacking these details, passage of the bill is premature, as those affected have had no input.

In winter, Anchorage has a population of about 1,000 moose. If the objective is to reduce accidents and injuries, to what level must the population be reduced? No one has provided the answer and no one likely can. If we had 800, or 600, or 500 moose, would the problems be solved? Reducing the risk to zero would mean eliminating the moose population. Most Anchorage residents oppose elimination of moose.

If about 150 moose were taken from the current 1,000 each year that would likely stabilize (but not reduce) the existing population. And, proportionate numbers would have to be taken in each subsequent year. Again, this would not reduce the present population. To accomplish that, 100-200 more moose (in addition to 150) would need to be removed initially.

For those who thought that only a handful of moose would be removed, the prospect of removing several hundred moose from the city casts the program in an entirely different light. It certainly multiplies the safety, mortality, and private property concerns.

Secondly, the Moose Federation has sold this program as an opportunity to increase existing populations elsewhere in Alaska. My previous points partially addressed the concern that this was very unlikely. Moose transported from Anchorage in winter when they are in poor condition and placed in a strange environment with deep snow to compete with local resident moose and be killed by wolves would survive at very low rates. I have talked with several moose biologist colleagues both inside and outside Alaska. None were aware of a successful moose-stocking program anywhere in North America that augmented an existing population. Augmenting an existing population is not the same as introducing moose into areas lacking them, or natural range extensions. Moose stocking advocates have confused these two very different situations.

In light of these and many other problems, I strongly urge the House Resources Committee to hold this bill until more discussion occurs and Anchorage residents affected by capturing moose in the city have additional input.

Vic Van Ballenberghe  
Anchorage

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
Bill Version: CSSB 329(RES)  
(S) Publish Date: 3/26/04

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: Fish and Game  
Title: Nuisance Moose RDU: Wildlife Conservation  
Component: Wildlife Conservation  
Sponsor: Senator Bunde  
Requester: Senate Finance Component No. 473

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2005 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)  
Passage of this legislation would have no fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Sarah Gilbertson, Legislative Liaison Phone 465-6137  
Division: Alaska Department of Fish & Game Date/Time 3/25/04 2:48 PM  
Approved by: Commissioner Kevin Duffy Date 3/25/2004  
Agency: Alaska Department of Fish & Game



Post Office Box 231028, Anchorage, Alaska 99523 (907) 33-MOOSE

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Believing in the value of healthy moose populations for all Alaskans, The Alaska Moose Federation will be the leader in the effort to both initiate and maintain the quantity and quality of Alaska's moose population.

Advisory Board

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Senator Lisa Murkowski  
Congressman Don Young  
Governor Frank Murkowski  
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Bill Collins—Range Scientist  
Bud Burris—Biologist  
Sterling Eide—Biologist

March 14, 2004

The Alaska Moose Federation Conservation Fund, Inc. Advisory Board Members

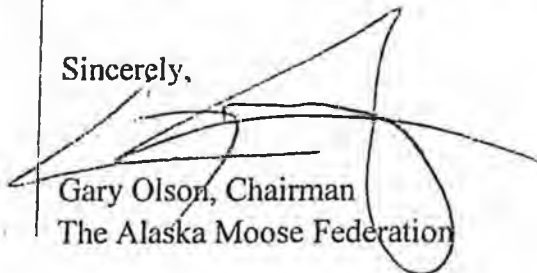
Dear Advisory Board Members;

Anchorage is very close to surviving its 2nd highest record snowfall winter. Our previous mild winters have spoiled a number of us who thought we were residents of a new banana belt but this winter has shown how not only Alaskans but also moose must cope with high snow levels in every day life. A major development The Alaska Moose Federation is close to accomplishing is its effort to provide a tool to the state of Alaska in the form of Senate Bill #329 that will be assigned to committees this week in Juneau. The bill is attached for your review. This bill allows the problem of ever-growing urban moose populations to be dealt with pro-actively by removing 'nuisance' urban moose from where they are a liability to rural Alaska where they will be an asset. Moose transplants of yesteryear were a common place with moving moose to the Copper River Delta, Berner' Bay and to other areas of Alaska. Major transplants have also occurred throughout areas of the 'lower 48' to re-establish herds in the states of Utah, Colorado and Michigan.

Please keep in mind that we are neither proposing something cavalier nor are we proposing unfunded mandates with putting the burden for these programs on the state that already is seeing major budget constraints. The primary biologist who is overseeing our efforts is the former state biologist who oversaw the caribou transplant to the Kenai Peninsula, muskox to the north slope of Alaska, bison, moose, sheep, etc. back when transplanting was the norm for the Department of Fish & Game. Our major cities in moose country are becoming incubators that must be dealt with. Being reactive to the negative aspects of growing moose populations is no longer acceptable.

We hope you enjoy the attached newsletter and also some detailed support for our senate bill. Thank you again for being on our Advisory Board. Many who have viewed our letterhead are enthused by such a substantial group of Alaskans coming together for the good of our moose and our state. I hope we are meeting your expectations as a non-profit. We look forward to your ideas and input of how we may better perform the mission of healthy moose statewide.

Sincerely,



Gary Olson, Chairman  
The Alaska Moose Federation



Post Office Box 231028, Anchorage, Alaska 99523 (907) 33-MOOSE

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Denali Borough Mayor  
David Talerico  
Rick Rydell—KENI Radio  
Talk Show Host  
Bill Collins—Range Scientist  
Bud Burris—Biologist  
Sterling Eide—Biologist

February 16, 2004

Dear Senate Bill #329 Supporters;

Please review the following Senate Bill #329 that would allow an organization such as the Alaska Moose Federation to transplant a minimum of 250 moose annually out of the Anchorage Bowl to begin to gain control of this ever growing moose population. Moose are definitely a unique aspect to Alaska's cities whose residents and visitors look forward to the occasional sight of a moose interacting with us. The problem is that the populations in cities throughout the state are growing thus putting more moose on our school grounds, roads, trails and neighborhoods at an alarming rate. Some schools in Anchorage have a near daily occurrence of 'pushing' moose off the playgrounds. We must have the tools to transplant moose to address these ever growing populations because inactivity continues to force us to experience negative aspects of life with moose.

It is imperative that we gather as many letters of support for the following Senate Bill #329 as possible this week. Address for Juneau is Senator Bunde, State Capitol Room #506, Juneau, Alaska 99801. Please provide an additional copy to The Alaska Moose Federation, P.O. Box 231028, Anchorage, Alaska 99523. Typical points of discussion/support to build your letters for supporting the bill are as follows:

- #1 South central Alaska is currently experiencing its 2nd highest snow fall this winter. Moose are continually placed in harms way on our roads, school grounds
- #2 Moose are a highly valued asset to the State of Alaska, and are important to all Alaskans.
- #3 People from all over the state will benefit from this one bill. Public safety is paramount in the cities where the moose populations are at a dangerous surplus and the Alaskan lifestyle is paramount throughout rural Alaska where moose are very scarce. The ability to transplant moose to rural Alaska to help rebuild existing populations is crucial.
- #4 From 1996—2000, there was an average of 661 moose/vehicle collisions throughout Alaska. According to 1995 DOT study, vehicle damage averages \$15,000 per hit. Also per that study, we can expect 2 times the number of moose/vehicle hits due to a heavy snow year that will total 1,322 moose/vehicle hits this year. \$15,000 per hit x 1,322 hits = \$19,830,000 in vehicle cost alone. We can no longer to allow moose (and people) to deal with these problems any more.

- #5 According to AKDOT 1995 study, 50% of all moose hit on roads are cows, 40% are calves (half are cows) and the remaining 10% are bulls. Each cow lost means a large reduction in future moose populations. This is unacceptable. Move moose away from the roads into safe areas where habitat is ample.
- #6 Public safety is a basic responsibility of the legislature. Please pass this legislation that will help stem off the negative aspect of moose when they interact with people. The UAA professor that was stomped to death a number of years ago at UAA was avoidable. If organizations are allowed to move animals out of harms way, both the moose and people will benefit. Public safety must be a driving component of this legislation.
- #7 Alaska's Constitution, Article VII, mandates moose management by the sustained yield principle (primarily for human food, based on the notes of the Natural Resources Committee from the Alaska Constitutional Convention) for the benefit of all Alaskans. In rural Alaska, moose are primarily used for food for human sustenance. However, failure to manage for the sustained yield of moose in remote Alaska has led to acute moose shortages in and around many Alaskan villages. Meeting the needs for moose in these situations should be a priority of the legislation.
- #8 Currently Department of Fish & Game has the population of moose at 2400 in the Anchorage Bowl. This population is healthy and ever increasing. Neighborhoods, roads and schools are continuing to be built while the human population also grows. Cars are getting smaller and faster while moose are continually coming onto our roads in increasing numbers. Currently the #1 moose/vehicle location is at Tudor and Bragraw. These tools that will allow proper stewardship of moose in our cities is absolutely necessary. Please support this legislation to help not only our moose but our residents too.
- #9 Imagine the concept of using surplus 'urban' moose to help rebuild dangerously low 'rural' moose populations. The old argument that has prevailed with some in power to continually pit Alaskans against each other has not produced any moose for any of us. Managing for minimums does not benefit anyone let alone anything. This is the beginning of Alaska handling our own affairs and is a great tool to show the Lower 48 that we know what the problems are and we are going to take care of our own business. This is the beginning of the healing of the urban-rural divide.
- #10 The Alaska Moose Federation was founded upon the concept that moose (a natural resource owned by all Alaskans) are too valuable to all Alaskans to allow to be wasted on our roads and in the cities of Alaska. Oil is also a commonly owned natural resource that has justified major action in verifying its quantity and quality for all Alaskans. Unlike oil, our moose are a renewable resource that can (if managed correctly) be here for generations to come. The AMF was created when the Alyeska pipeline was shot and the state agencies responded immediately to that state of emergency. Senate Bill #329 will begin to give Alaska's moose the same worth as Alaska's oil. It is a tool that will allow organizations like the AMF begin to 'fix' our moose problems to return Alaska to its earlier reputation of the world's greatest moose.
- #11 Transplanting moose is nothing new to the State of Alaska. Moose were collected throughout south central Alaska and moved to the Copper River Delta near Cordova from 1949 to 1958. Moose were also sent near Juneau and to Kalgin Island. Moose have also been successfully transplanted in Utah, Colorado and Michigan to establish new populations. The Alaska Moose Federation is offering to raise all funds associated with these projects while under the oversight of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

Thank you for staying involved and let's grow some moose!

Gary Olson, Chairman  
The Alaska Moose Federation

# ALASKA MOOSE FEDERATION

## Moose Facts to Get You Involved!

### DID YOU KNOW #1

Sweden, the size of California, harvested over 170,000 moose last year. Alaska currently has around 150,000 moose total. Alaskans can manage better.

### DID YOU KNOW #2

What about nature's way? We run our Railroad through some of the best habitat in the state, we push our roads through moose's migration routes and we put most fires out as soon as they start which is nature's way of creating moose food. We are all part of nature.

### DID YOU KNOW #3

With 600+ moose hit by cars in our cities with each collision costing \$15,000.00, Alaskans annually pay \$9,000,000.00 and climbing. This does not take into account loss of wages, medical costs or even loss of human life. Alaskans must do better on our roads.

### DID YOU KNOW #4

The 600 moose lost each year on our roads consist of 50% cows, 40% calves and 10% bulls. Since a cow is worth around 30 animals because of her population potential and half of the calves are cows, we really lose 12,780 moose on our roads alone. We need to do better!

### DID YOU KNOW #5

Each year, about 650,000 moose, caribou and sheep babies are born in Alaska. Of this population, less than 3% will be harvested by human hunters. About 10% will die of natural causes while the remaining 87% (600,000 animals) will be killed by predators.

### DID YOU KNOW #6

In Unit 13, once considered the bread basket of the state that consists of 23,000 square miles, the moose population reached a high in the fall of 1988 of 27,500 moose. In 2000, the fall population was 9,000 moose. It has been said that given these trends, there may likely be no moose in a majority of the unit in the near future.

### DID YOU KNOW #7

The Alaska State Constitution mandates the State of Alaska to manage moose on sustained yield principle for the benefit of the resource and the people of the state. With our new State Administration, the Dept. of Fish & Game, Department of Natural Resources and the Alaska Moose Federation working together, we can take proactive roles of rebuilding our moose.

### DID YOU KNOW #8

A moose, in order to stay healthy, must eat 40 pounds of browse daily.

### DID YOU KNOW #9

Large bull moose are extremely vital to healthy moose populations. In the rut (annual mating season), large groups of cow moose (called harems) gather under the protection of ideally a large bull (greater than 50" spread). The cows all come into estrus simultaneously. Only large bulls can sire all the cows in their first cycle. If a younger bull is overseeing the harem, some of the cows will miss being impregnated until the next cycle that will cause the calves to drop a month late in the spring. Not only do these calves face much higher mortality rates because they have one month less to prepare for winter, but also the window of opportunity for predators to take these newborns is extended thus impacting the herd twice as hard. The Alaska Moose Federation will establish herds where large, dominant bulls are the norm and not the exception.

TED STEVENS, ALASKA, CHAIRMAN

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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

[www.senate.gov/appropriations](http://www.senate.gov/appropriations)

JAMES W. MORHARD, STAFF DIRECTOR  
TERENCE S. SAUVAGE, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

July 31, 2003

Gary Olson  
Chairman  
The Alaska Moose Federation  
P.O. Box 231028  
Anchorage, Alaska 99523

Dear Gary:

Thank you for your offer of a position on the Advisory Board of the Alaska Moose Federation. I appreciate the efforts you are undertaking in rebuilding and maintaining stable moose populations and I look forward to participating in your efforts. An issue such as this one is important to the state as a whole and it seems that you have been conscious of this in your efforts to solicit state-wide opinion. I congratulate you for this and you may include my name in your letterhead.

With best wishes,

Cordially,



TED STEVENS

LISA MURKOWSKI  
ALASKA  
MAJORITY DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEES:  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WATER AND POWER  
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## United States Senate

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101 12TH AVENUE, BOX 7  
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701-6278  
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P.O. Box 21647  
JUNEAU, AK 99802-1647  
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130 TRADING BAY ROAD, SUITE 350  
KENAI, AK 99611-7716  
(907) 283-5808

540 WATER STREET, SUITE 101  
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901-6378  
(907) 225-6880

851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE, SUITE 307  
WASILLA, AK 99654-7142  
(907) 376-7665

February 23, 2004

Gary Olsen  
Alaska Moose Federation  
P.O. Box 231028  
Anchorage, AK 99523

Dear Gary:

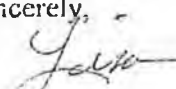
I read with great interest the Sunday Anchorage Daily News story about the Federation's work related to moose and traffic accidents, the lack of moose in many parts of the state and the need to address solutions for both subsistence hunters and Alaskan drivers. For subsistence hunters who rely on moose to meet their basic dietary needs the lack of moose in rural Alaska is devastating, while Alaska's sport hunters also feel the frustration with declining moose populations; for Alaskans who live on the road system the threat of hitting a moose at high speed is a life and death issue.

As a member of the Senate's Environment and Public Works Committee, which has jurisdiction over highway programs, I am particularly interested in learning more about your suggestions for road fencing and over- or under-passes to allow moose to safely cross the road. Consideration of wildlife crossings was an integral part of the highway authorization bill that recently passed the Senate. This is an especially important issue for parent's whose children attend school in areas with high moose populations. Playing on the playground and waiting for school buses can be dangerous if moose are in the area.

I would also welcome further information on your idea of transplanting moose to areas of Alaska where the populations are declining. If practical, this idea could help both the overpopulation problem in urban areas while also addressing the subsistence and hunting problems in rural Alaska. I would be interested in seeing data from Fish and Wildlife experts on this suggested approach. Recalling that moose were transplanted from Southcentral Alaska to the Copper River Delta and to Southeast Alaska in the 1950's I know this is a possibility that needs to be fully examined.

Having lived in Alaska all my life I know the unique needs moose fill for many Alaskans and anything we can do to stabilize their populations can only help. I look forward to hearing more from you in the future.

Sincerely,

  
Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

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Oliver E. Burris  
2801 Talkeetna Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907 474-0437

The Honorable Senator Con Bundy  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Bundy:

Thank you for sponsoring SB329 to allow the transplanting of moose from the Anchorage Bowl Area.

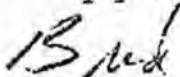
I organized the capture and transplant of bison from Delta Junction to May Creek and Farewell. Also the capture and transplant of caribou from Chistochina to the Kenai Peninsula. These transplants were done with adult and subadult animals. The transplant of moose from the Anchorage Bowl will help to alleviate many public safety problems. You may already be aware of the cost to Alaskans in human casualties and property damage. The Alaska Moose Federation has documented these tremendous costs to the public and our economy.

Transplanting adult, subadult and calf moose is a practical way to help reduce moose problems. The Board of Game unanimously supported the bill on March 10, 2004. The Division cautioned the Board because of concerns that the private transplant efforts may put additional strain on the already reduced budget of the Division of Wildlife Conservation. Ron Scriver suggested that we could learn more about the effects of transplanting moose by radio collaring them. The Department reiterated that the Board's preceding actions to more actively manage moose in several intensive management areas would already be a burden on Division budgets.

Clearly the benefit of your bill will be to reduce the severe problems in the Anchorage Bowl. The benefits to areas where moose may be transplanted is a secondary benefit. It will not put additional strain on Fish and Game budgets unless they choose to become financially involved.

I am on the Advisory Board of the Alaska Moose Federation. I have been involved with the planning and design since its' inception. I would enjoy discussing moose management in the Anchorage area and other areas in our State. I have stayed actively involved in wildlife management since I retired from the Game Division in 1986 after 25 years with the Division.

Sincerely yours,



Oliver "Bud" Burris

## **Moose Relocation Comments**

**Dr. Victor VanBallenberghe**

**Provided to Senator Con Bunde via e-mail from a constituent.**

I see several problems with the idea of transplanting adult moose and cows with calves out of urban areas and releasing them in distant places to boost moose populations:

- 1) Capturing and transporting adult moose long distances has not been tried in Alaska. It has been done elsewhere including moose captured in Canada and transported to Michigan. It must be done carefully and with experienced people including wildlife vets. ADFG would have to be heavily involved as they have the expertise. Private citizens do not. Even with experienced people, transport is risky and mortalities result. Several years ago caribou were captured near Glennallen by ADFG and transported to Kenai. In one operation using cattle trailers many of the animals were injured and some died.
- 2) The plan to transport adult moose to distant, remote places like McGrath is probably not feasible because of the time necessary to capture, hold, and fly the animals out. Keeping adults under anesthesia for long periods is very risky and can result in high death rates. The only feasible areas to receive moose are along the road system where, in some cases, moose are already plentiful including the Kenai Peninsula, and the Mat-Su Valley. Putting more moose there would be foolish.
- 3) The narcotic drugs used to capture moose (Carfentanil and Naltrexone) are very dangerous to humans--a single drop on the skin can be fatal. When darting moose, shots are sometimes missed and lost loaded darts end up on the ground. If the moose capture program was in effect in Anchorage and involved many moose, there would be lost darts. In urban areas people, including children) can find lost darts and be exposed to very high risks. This is a serious problem. Another problem is that people cannot eat moose meat from darted animals for long periods (months) without the danger of narcotic poisoning. How could local hunters (and poachers) distinguish recently transplanted moose from other moose in the area?
- 4) Transporting adult moose out of their normal home ranges and putting them in strange areas where they have no knowledge of foraging locations would likely result in high rates of mortality. They would also likely have to adapt to a new diet. Most moose in Alaska are seasonally migratory. They learn migration routes from their mothers. Moose in strange areas with no knowledge of migration routes or destinations would likely perish. Moose in Alaska are typically subject to predation by bears and wolves and are hunted by people. Moose in strange areas with no knowledge of predator escape features (ponds, lakes, streams, dense cover, etc.) would likely be easy prey.
- 5) The history of wildlife stocking programs in the U.S. is that cost:benefit ratios are not favorable. It is much wiser and prudent to work on improving habitat quality for wild populations. Stocking programs generally involve game birds. The only ungulate programs are for re-introducing certain species like bighorn sheep into areas where they are absent, not trying to boost existing natural populations. Is there a single example where this has been successfully done elsewhere?
- 6) The goal of increasing moose numbers in other areas by stocking adults from urban areas has a very low probability of success. Low moose numbers exist for several reasons--severe winters, poor habitat, bear and wolf predation, and overhunting. So, putting additional animals into the population would not result in a higher population unless the underlying limiting factors were addressed. To boost moose numbers in the Glennallen area (where densities are already moderate) it would likely

take transplanting several hundred animals if they had high survival rates. As mentioned above, they would actually likely have low survival rates.

7) The Cordova moose transplant of the 1950s has been mentioned as an example of a successful program. It's important to know that this effort involved transporting young calves to Cordova where they were raised and later released on the Copper River Delta. No wild moose were there at the time. There were also no wolves. The habitat was very high quality--some of the best in Alaska. Winters were mild. In short, all the necessary conditions were present in order to have moose thrive. In southcentral and interior areas with existing moose populations, severe winters, bears, wolves, and mediocre habitat, the situation is much different.

8) The proposed capture and transport program would very likely be highly controversial in Anchorage, just as the proposed moose hunts were several years ago. Many people enjoy moose and will object to lowering the population greatly. Others will object to moose being pursued and darted in their yards. And, this program will likely not lower the risk of car-moose collisions and moose-human interactions significantly unless a very high fraction of the moose population is removed.

Hope this helps!

Vic

## Summary of Biologists' Responses to Dr. Van Ballenberghe's Comments About Moose Relocation

### Oliver Burris

Retired in 1986 after 25 years with AKF&G. Last post was Region III Management Coordinator for the Game Division. Also served as Biologist in charge of game transplants from 1962 to 1965. Authored "Game Transplants in Alaska." Planned and organized bison and caribou transplants. Also captured deer and elk in California.

- 1) There may be some moose mortality associated with the relocation of moose. However, that risk must be put into perspective with the risk to animals and humans but not relocating them.
- 2) Adult animals are captured and held for considerable time and transported all over the world by ground, sea and air.
- 3) There are areas along the road systems where moose are not plentiful, such as Unit 13, where there is an ongoing predator control program.
- 4) The risk to humans from capture drugs must be placed in perspective with moose attacks. ADF&G regularly uses drugs to capture moose, caribou, bears, etc. The department deals successfully with the problem.
- 5) Moose have been successfully transplanted in Alaska. Moose are able to adapt to new diets; they eat bird feed, farm plants, ornamental garden plants, etc.
- 6) Moose avoid predators naturally. It is not just a learned behavior.
- 7) There were bears and wolves in the Copper River delta to which moose were transported in the past.
- 8) The AK Moose Federation looks at moose relocation as one part of an overall plan that includes under passes, over passes, directional fencing, diversionary habitat, trails, supplemental feeding.

**Summary of Biologists' Responses to Dr. Van Ballenberghe's Comments About Moose Relocation**  
**Page 2**

Wayne Heimer

Retired AK Dept. of Fish and Game biologist. Now operates a wildlife consulting business in Fairbanks. Has degrees in chemistry, zoology, molecular biology and physiology. Worked primarily with Dall sheep and authored approximately 100 published papers ranging from physiology to politics. Candidate for post of Commissioner of F&G.

Dr. Van Ballenberghe's comments should be taken in light of his record from which his philosophical position can be inferred. He often works with the AK Wildlife Alliance and the AK Defenders of Animals. Please evaluate my comments in the light of my perspective also. While he has considerable wildlife experience, his record shows he has typically taken an opposing position regarding active wildlife management. He is risk-averse to the point of being inactive.

- 1) **Capturing and transporting adult moose has not been tried in Alaska, ADFG would have to be heavily involved because they have the experience. Even with experienced people, transport is risky and mortalities result.**

There is no doubt that transplant of adult moose must be done carefully. It is desirable that this be done by experienced people. However, veterinarians are not required, and neither are people with specific experience relocating moose. What is needed are adaptable people who understand the animals and the system. Experience is gained by trying. If we dare not try for fear of failure, we'll never do anything. Dr. Van Ballenberghe's position must be seen as an extension of his reluctance to act without assurance of success.

- 2) **The plan to transport adult moose to remote distant places is probably not feasible. The only feasible places to move moose to are on the road system where putting more moose would be foolish.**

The AK Zoo has offered to act as a holding facility. Efforts are under way to arrange rational transportation to Department-identified transplant sites where survival will be maximized. Past successes are greater than Dr. Van Ballenberghe admits.

- 3) **Drugs are too dangerous to humans, darts can be lost and lay on the ground. Also, people cannot eat moose that have been darted for months.**

Moose were successfully immobilized by several generations of drugs before those commonly used today. If the drugs are so dangerous to humans the Department is taking unacceptable risks with the lives of its employees. As for the "lost dart" problem, this can be managed. I believe current technology allows the attachment of a tiny radio transmitter to any dart for recovery. When darts hit something - moose or dirt or tree - the tiny explosive charge that makes the injection fires, discharging the drug. Re: persistence of drugs in moose meat, some of the older drugs were processed by the animal in much shorter time. In addition, physical capture should be investigated. Getting a moose into an enclosed area with the lure of food would greatly reduce the chances of darts going astray.

- 4) **Moving moose out of their home ranges would greatly increase mortality because the forage would be different, as would escape routes from predators.**

Moose are adaptable. After all, calves, not adults, were successfully transplanted to the Copper River area. Yet they survived and multiplied. If "knowing the territory" protects moose from predation, why are so many resident moose being driven to low levels by predation? Numerous wildlife transplants have been successful down South and in Alaska.

**Summary of Biologists' Responses to Dr. Van Ballenberghe's Comments About Moose Relocation**  
**Page 3**

**5) Failed history of wildlife stocking. Better to improve habitat.**

Dr. Van Ballenberghe is mistaken. There are numerous examples in Alaska and elsewhere where large hoofed mammals have been successfully introduced. Ex: deer to Kodiak, goats to Kodiak, bison to Delta and Farewell, moose to Kalgin Island, moose to Copper River, elk to Raspberry Island, elk to Etolin Island, caribou to Adak and St. Matthew Island, etc.

**6) The goal of increasing moose in other areas has a very low probability of success due to severe winters, poor habitat, predation, and overhunting.**

The AK Moose Federation is not interested in transplanting moose from Anchorage just to get rid of them. They have no intention of placing moose where predation is high, poaching is uncontrolled or habitats are unsuitable. The goal is to move moose from where they are a liability to where they can be an asset.

**7) Cordova Moose Relocation is a poor example – used calves, no wolves, best habitat, and mild winters.**

See #4.

**8) Proposed program would be controversial and will likely not reduce car-moose collisions and moose-human interactions significantly unless many moose are removed.**

Some Anchorage residents might not like it. If education could solve the problem with no action, couldn't education be used to help Anchorage residents understand and support the relocation program? I also agree that a meek approach to relocation will not fully address the problem of nuisance moose. The answer is to significantly reduce the moose population in Anchorage. In Fairbanks, hunting is allowed. In Anchorage, where it is not, prudent action calls for other means.

My comments are not the last word on this program and Dr. Van Ballenberghe's should not be, either.

Dr. Karen Rudolph, Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game

The idea that transplant of animals via F&G agencies have an implicit 5% rule, with or without the presence of a wildlife vet to try to keep mortality under 5%. We transplant animals in Idaho frequently without a vet.

In addition, high moose density spells potential disease hell. Take a look at Yellowstone and the artificially high density of elk for viewing and bison.

Oliver E. Burris  
2801 Talkeetna Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
907 474-0437

April 6, 2004

TO: Karen McCarthy  
Staff for Senator Con Bunde

FROM: Oliver "Bud" Burris  
Alaska Moose Federation Advisory Board

RE: SB 329

I retired in 1986 after 25 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. At the time of my retirement I was the Region III Management coordinator for the Game Division. I was the Biologist in charge of game transplants for four years, 1962 to 1965. I authored the publication "Game Transplants in Alaska." I planned and organized the bison transplants to May creek and Farewell and caribou to the Kenai peninsula. Prior to coming to Alaska I had captured deer and elk in California

1) Capturing and transporting adult moose may result in some mortality. With the sophisticated drugs now available, (22 years after the transplant of adult bison and caribou) there can still be drug and trauma mortality. the risk to the animals must be put in perspective to the risk to the animals and the public by not capturing and transporting them.

2) Adult animals are captured and held for a considerable period of time and transported all over the world by ground, air and sea. Adult elephants, rhinoceros, zebras, and buffalo to name a few. The hunting of exotic big game in Texas has resulted from transporting adult animals. Adult bison were captured and held at Delta Junction for over a week before being transported by aircraft to Farewell. Adult muskox were transplanted to the Seward Peninsula, the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and the north slope.

There are areas along road systems where moose are not plentiful. Unit 13 once contained 30,000 moose and now contain 7,000 to 8,000. Unit 13 has five major highways. There is an on-going predator control program in Units 13 and 19 which will reduce the risk to transplanted moose.

3) The risk to humans from capture drugs must be placed in perspective to the risk from moose accidents and attacks. ADF&G regularly uses drugs to captured moose, caribou, bears etc. in areas where these animals can be legally hunted. The department deals successfully with the problem.

4) Moose have emigrated into parts of Alaska since the early 1900's. In the late 1950's and early 1960's moose emigrated into the Seward Peninsula, northwest Alaska and the north slope. Moose have moved from locations where they were captured to new areas never to return. Moose have the ability to adapt to new diets like ornamental and exotic plants, bird feeders, new agricultural areas and farms etc.

The inherent behavior of moose is to avoid predators it is not just a learned behavior specific to a moose's individual niche.

5) Cost benefit ratios of transplanting game are not just measured in the benefits to the transplanted population but to the benefits to the area from which they are transplanted.

6) Increasing moose numbers by transplanting is a secondary goal. Considering the deplorable state of moose management in the state it falls into the category of "anything might help".

7) There were certainly black and brown bears in the Copper River Delta and wolves were either there or there shortly after the transplant.

8) The moose capture and transplant in the Anchorage Bowl area is no more controversial than the human casualties and property damage from moose.

The State (Alaska Department of Fish and Game) has failed to deal with the impacts of urban development on wildlife and likewise the impact of wildlife on urban development.

The Alaska Moose Federation is dealing with these issues on a broad basis. The development of under passes, over passes, directional fencing, development of diversionary habitat, trails and supplemental feeding are a few of the other factors the AMF is trying to consider to reduce moose mortality and the cost to human lives and property. Capturing and transplanting moose is not a panacea to all the wildlife problems in the Anchorage area. Authorizing this program will awaken the public to the need for imaginative wildlife management to sustain our Alaskan Wildlife heritage.

vanballengerghе manifesto

April 6, 2004

To: Karen McCarthy  
Staff for Senator Con Bunde

From: Wayne E. Heimer  
Fairbanks, Alaska

Re: Van Ballenberghe Critique of SB 329

I am a biologist, retired from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and I operate a wildlife consulting business in Fairbanks. I have degrees in chemistry, zoology, molecular biology, and physiology. I worked, primarily with Dall sheep for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and am the author of approximately 100 published papers (most scientific, some non-technical) ranging from physiology to politics. There was considerable support for my appointment as Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game during the transition period of the Murkowski administration. I may fairly be challenged with respect to expertise on the specifics of moose immobilization and transplant because I don't have much direct experience with it. Still, I suggest my record shows I am a capable researcher, and possess the ability to understand a broad range of issues with respect to SB 329. The Alaska Moose Federation has asked me to comment on the concerns from one of Senator Bunde's constituents in Anchorage. I received this request by fax this morning. I infer from the correspondence that the author is Dr. Victor Van Ballenberghe. I have known and watched Dr. Van Ballenberghe for almost 30 years.

My first suggestion is that any comments Dr. Van Ballenberghe makes with respect to SB 329 be considered in light of his record from which we may infer his philosophical position. I consider this important because one's philosophy will affect the perspective from which one speaks, and the content of subsequent suggestions. This is true for me as well as Dr. Van Ballenberghe. Please evaluate my comments in the light of my perspective. Dr. Van Ballenberghe and I have virtually opposite philosophies of management, particularly where the politics of risk are involved.

While Dr. Van Ballenberghe has considerable wildlife experience (much of it with moose), speaks in a quiet and well-modulated tone, and alleges considerable scientific credibility, the record shows he has typically taken an opposing or obstructionist position regarding active wildlife management to benefit humans unless a positive outcome can be absolutely assured. Dr. Van Ballenberghe's public record shows he is risk-averse to the point of being inactive as a manager. Dr. Van Ballenberghe has, I recall, been appointed to the Board of Game two times. Both appointments seemingly served the anti-management stance of the Governor who made them. Hence, I do not find Dr. Van Ballenberghe's opposition to SB 329 the least bit surprising. For this reason, I am willing to discuss his comments in the light of a differing perspective.

Dr. Van Ballenberghe often works with the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, Gordon Haber, and Alaska Defenders of Animals to oppose moose-related actions which are likely to increase human benefit. Because of Dr. Van Ballenberghe's record (which I infer stems more from philosophy than being steeped in pragmatic wildlife management), I suggest we critically consider his comments in some depth. They may represent perspective more than objective reality.

**Allegation 1, Expertise does not exist:** There is no doubt that transplant of adult moose must be done carefully. I agree it is desirable that this be done by experienced people. However, it is rational to question whether, as Dr. Van Ballenberghe alleges, it "*Must be done by. . .experienced people including wildlife vets.*" Dr. Van Ballenberghe raises some subsequent issues that are readily disputable and refutable. Hence, I infer he is willing to make expansive statement such as this one because it serves the greater purpose of frustrating the intent of SB 329. This statement is expansive, and so intuitively desirable that one must be fairly guarded to examine it closely. If no "experienced people" exist in Alaska, whether the bill passes or not doesn't matter. Hence, Dr. Van Ballenberghe speaks to defeat the bill when he makes this statement. In truth, the statement is false because of its expanse. Sure, it would be nice if we had experienced people and vets to do the work, but vets, particularly, are not a requisite, and neither are people with specific experience doing this very work. What is needed for the program to succeed are adaptable people who understand the animals and the system well enough to be effective. In fact, one never knows what is going to happen in any anticipated experience till it is undertaken. Experience is gained by trying stuff. If we dare not try because we fear or allege failure, we'll never do anything. This has been a common position taken by Dr. Van Ballenberghe over the years, particularly with respect to wolf/predator management. I suggest the position taken on SB 329 may be rationally seen as an extension of this reluctance to act without assurance of success. Obviously, I'm less frightened by what might go wrong (and more inclined to view the positives of the issue as a worthwhile challenge) or I wouldn't be going to the trouble to make these comments.

**Allegation #2: "Catch and carry" won't work:** The Alaska Moose federation fully realizes the difficulties in transplant, and is actively working on them. Efforts are being made to obtain a safe holding facility for moose removed from Anchorage, and arrange rational transportation to Department-identified transplant sites when survival will be maximized. The importance of SB 329 is not that every aspect of the program be codified in law. Rather the necessity for SB 329 is that the Department has given up efforts to manage moose in the best interests of the economy and general well-being of the state (from AS 16.05) in the Anchorage area. Hunting is apparently off the table, and social/economic/resource costs are too high to ignore any longer. If the Department lacks the vision to act, the legislature, as ultimate trustee of the moose resource must pursue alternate approaches to letting the Department do nothing. I see this as the essence of SB 329. Besides that, it might really work! The situation is less grim than Dr. Van Ballenberghe alleges, and past successes are greater than he admits. The assumptions Dr. Van Ballenberghe makes as to how the moose would be handled betray ignorance of the longer range plans of the Alaska Moose Federation. Raising potential "bogey men

level" details is an insufficient reason to give up on the concepts of SB 329. That level of detail doesn't belong in law anyway...does it?

**Allegation #3: Drugs are too dangerous:** Dr. Van Ballenberghe paints the worst possible scenario here. Moose were successfully immobilized by several generations of drugs before Carfentanil and Naltrexone became the drugs of choice. These drugs did not become "the standards" because other drugs didn't work, they just work better for the moose than what was used for years. I don't claim to know everything about these drugs, but somehow we used to dart moose and many other things with "acceptable" levels of mortality before these drugs were discovered. If these drugs are so dangerous to humans that one drop on the skin kills, the Department is taking unacceptable risks with the lives of its employees by allowing them to use these drugs in routine field capture operations. I realize there is a stringent safety protocol, but in my career, I have known many biologists who would have been killed on the job if they'd been using this drug. Nobody should be taking this level of risk because the rewards are not worth it. What do we routinely gain from biologists routinely taking these risks? As for the "lost dart" problem, I believe this can be managed. First rule...don't miss. Second rule...recover any missed darts. I think I have read that current technology allows the attachment of a tiny radio transmitter to any dart one may use...hence all should be recoverable. Additionally, it seems the likelihood of an inaccurate dart remaining intact (with the contents not sprayed into the area it impacts) are remote. This means the contents of the dart don't lie there like an unexploded land mine. Typically when a dart misses the target the explosive charge that would normally make the injection fires, discharging the drug into the air (or ground). What this means is that the normal oxidative decomposition process resulting from exposing a finely divided drug load to atmospheric oxygen, water, soil etc. begins immediately to change the chemical composition of the drug. We don't know this process, but it is probably well beyond a neat package of drugs lying in a dart. This, of course, does not negate the responsible management requirement for any immobilizing agent, but is intended to, again, raise the possibility that there are some practical chemical reactions Dr. Van Ballenberghe may not have considered. With respect to the persistence of drugs in animals that may be eaten, this issue has been dealt with for years. Some of the earlier drugs (which may be adequate and more suitable for this sort of work) were processed by the animal body in times considerably shorter than the "months" alleged by Dr. Van Ballenberghe. Given other expansive statements he makes here, I would want to see some data from a qualified animal pharmacologist before taking this as invariably true. Here, there seems to have been some evolution of concern with the Department. In my memory the Department's ANWR caribou team actually turned caribou loose with live darts aimed at their necks so they could be recaptured later. That now seems unthinkable, but didn't at the time. How much of this drug issue is real and how much is paranoia? I don't think Dr. Van Ballenberghe is the last word on this issue. I'm certainly not either.

Addendum (April 7, 2004): Heard back from ADF&G vet about drugs...phone message only. The current drug of choice is Carfentanil, and it is dangerous to humans. Reversal is through the other drug Dr. Van Ballenberghe mentions, Naltrexone. I suggest someone may want to ask if the reversal drug is as dangerous as the narcotic immobilizer.

Typically the "reversal drugs" are not toxic...they are antagonists to the drug that knocks the critter down.

Also, yesterday when we spoke, I mentioned that physical capture should be investigated. This has never really been considered by ADF&G simply because the Department usually works in the field. In an urban setting with tolerant moose, I suggest the possibilities for physical capture and less dramatic immobilization/sedation may open vistas of handling moose which have not yet been "thunk up." Nobody's tried.

**Allegation #4, You shouldn't move a moose:** The grim scenario predicted by Dr. Van Ballenberghe here doesn't sufficiently respect the adaptive behavior of moose or other large hoofed mammals. If moose are really as unable to adapt as Dr. Van Ballenberghe suggests, the successful introduction of moose to the Copper River could not have occurred. After all, calves (not adults) were successfully transplanted to that area. These calves were habituated to the area somewhat before they were released, but they certainly didn't know the country outside the pen when they were let go. Somehow they survived, had more calves, and we have sustained a harvestable population there for what...40 years...now? It can't be as bad as Dr. Van Ballenberghe would have you believe. As for the fear that moose would be easy prey for wolves in areas where they don't "know the territory," one should ask, "If knowing the territory protects moose from predation, why are so many resident moose populations being driven to low levels by predators?" Were there no predators when those hapless calves were transplanted in days of old? Somehow, against all odds according to Dr. Van Ballenberghe's accounting, numerous wildlife introductions (including large hoofed animals) have been successful and produce human benefits...even in Alaska.

**Allegation #5, Appeal to failed history of wildlife stocking:** Here, Dr. Van Ballenberghe is clearly mistaken. What is the cost/benefit ratio of introducing deer to Kodiak Island? What is the cost/benefit ratio of introducing goats to Kodiak Island? What is the cost/benefit ratio of introducing plains bison to Delta...or Farewell? What was the cost/benefit ratio of introducing moose to Kalgin Island? What was the cost/benefit ratio of introducing moose to the Copper River? What was the cost/benefit ratio of introducing elk to Raspberry Island? What was the cost/benefit ratio of introducing elk to Etolin Island? The number of bighorn sheep in North America has doubled in the last 25 years. This increase has been primarily due to translocation of bighorn sheep to empty habitats. However, in the bighorn sheep business transplants are now routinely proposed to boost existing populations (and to presumably increase genetic diversity). Yes, there are numerous examples, given above in Alaska, where large hoofed mammals have been successfully introduced. I have not even mentioned those where the introductions succeeded, but the resulted human benefits were not realized. These examples are primarily related to introducing caribou to Adak Island, St. Matthew Island etc.

**Allegation #6: Taking urban moose to augment rural populations won't work:** The Alaska Moose Federation has made it abundantly clear that it is not interested in transplanting moose out of Anchorage just to get rid of them. It has no intention of

placing moose where predator loads are high, poaching is uncontrolled, or habitats are unsuitable. The Department of Fish and Game is expected to be a fully funded participant in any decisions of this type. At present, the Foundation is looking primarily to GMU 18. This area is presently at one tenth the ADF&G population goal. Hence, I presume the habitat is adequate for 2,000 (not 200) moose. The primary environmental resistance has been presumed to be unregulated harvest, but this has recently been addressed by the Alaska Village Initiative. I don't know what the predator situation may be on the Kuskokwin below Bethel, but presume it is not of great significance to the moose population because ADF&G reports never mention it prominently. Dr. Van Ballenberghe might be right. The transplant might fail. However, the immediate issue with SB 329 is remove moose from where they are a liability to the people of the state and attempt to turn them into an asset. I can't help wonder what Dr. Van Ballenberghe might suggest as a remedy to the economic losses resulting from dangerously dense (to humans and vehicles) in Anchorage might be. I suggest the possible benefits outweigh the potential risks.

**Allegation #7: See allegation #4:**

**Allegation #8, Folks in Anchorage might not like it:** I agree with Dr. Van Ballenberghe that some folks in Anchorage won't like it. I have little doubt that he and his friends will assure they are heard and encouraged. His arguments here are similar to those Ms. Karen Deathridge made before the Senate Resources Committee. At that point, Ms. Deathridge argued that education was the way to help Anchorage residents coexist with high moose densities. If education, the common proposed solution offered by those who dislike active wildlife management, could solve the problem with no action (which I doubt), couldn't education bring the moose-loving residents of Anchorage to support a population reduction in the name of public safety? If the public in Anchorage knew of the economic losses and human costs resulting from moose-vehicle collisions alone, and if they thought these moose could provide an eventual sustainable resource for use in rural Alaska, would these people be selfish enough to insist that the Anchorage moose population not be significantly reduced?

I also agree with Dr. Van Ballenberghe that, as currently structured, SB 329 (if it is still the "three strikes and you're out" program for individual moose the Department of Fish and Game crafted as an amendment) will produce no benefit for anyone. Not enough moose will be moved to alter the existing problem (and therefore not address the problems associated with high urban moose populations), and little subsequent benefit is likely to occur elsewhere. If SB 329 is to rationally address the problem that I think actually exists, the answer is to significantly reduce the moose population in Anchorage (and Fairbanks). In Fairbanks, hunting is allowed. If this solution is unthinkable in Anchorage (because the residents there have been "educated" concerning the value of viewable moose), prudent action calls for removal by another means. Oddly, the Department of Fish and Game is sufficiently interested in lowering moose numbers in the Tanana Flats that it is willing to endure considerable public hatred and disrespect for promoting the harvest of four-month old calves; those moose are not a risk to anything other than the willows they eat. In contrast, the Department is insufficiently interested in

lowering the moose population in Anchorage to even consider anything beyond "education." Hence, I am supportive of legislative action as the trustees of the moose resource in all of Alaska.

There's more to this than Dr. Van Ballenberghe and I have offered. Certainly, I'm not the last word on this issue, and I don't think Dr. Van Ballenberghe is either.

**Subject: Fwd: RE: SB 329 analysis of "Vic's" comments**

**Date: Wed, 07 Apr 2004 09:45:06 -0700**

**From: Wayne Heimer <weheimer@alaska.net>**

**To: Senator\_Con\_Bunde@legis.state.ak.us**

**CC: Karen Rudolph <krudolph@IDFG.STATE.ID.US>**

Karen,

This from a colleague in Idaho...sent piece there for review. Dr. Rudolph doesn't know who Vic Van Ballenberghe is. Thought you might find Dr. Rudolph's mention of disease potential interesting...particularly in urban settings where risk of transmission of disease to moose is higher for a number of reasons. Of course, it hasn't happened yet...Delta brainworm issue notwithstanding. Those of us who consider wildlife diseases (imported ones primarily) a threat have always been more concerned about moose and other critters that move in out of areas where domestic livestock and pets are present. Where do you think the lice that infected the Kenai wolves originated? Domestic doggies is the best answer. There are other examples. As I said before, if moose densities were as high in the wild as they are in our cities, the Department would be falling all over itself to reduce those densities.

Regards,

Wayne

>Date: Wed, 07 Apr 2004 10:11:01 -0600

>From: "Rudolph, Karen" <krudolph@IDFG.STATE.ID.US>

>Subject: RE: SB 329 analysis of "Vic's" comments

>To: Wayne Heimer <weheimer@alaska.net>

>Thread-topic: SB 329 analysis of "Vic's" comments

>Thread-index: AcQcNhaDfeI3zXNVTmeNTR1OWs8TsgAhAGdV

>X-MS-Has-Attach:

>X-MS-TNEF-Correlator:

>X-ACS-Spam-Status: no

>X-ACS-Scanned-By: MD 2.38; SA 2.63; spamdefang 1.93

>Original-recipient: rfc822;weheimer@alaska.net

>

>Wayne,

>

>What a travesty to game mgmt to have a wildlife vet (is that what he is?)  
>speak on the public record so. Wow. I had only a couple of supporting  
>comments, to include the idea that transplant of animals via F&G agencies  
>have an implicit 5% rule, with or without the presence of a wildlife vet,  
>to try to keep mortality under 5%. We transplant animals in Idaho (or  
>sample, etc) frequently without a vet. And we have 2 W/L vets for the  
>state. Second, if folks want their moose for viewing in Anchorage &/or  
>Fairbanks, they should consider the implications. High moose density  
>spells potential disease hell. Tell 'em to look at Yellowstone and the  
>artificially high density of elk for viewing (feed in, of course), and bison.  
>  
>You keep it up guy!

K. Rudolph

>

State of Alaska  
 Department of Public Safety  
 Moose-related Case Activity  
 FY 2002 - FY 2003

Motor Vehicle Accident / Moose-Related Case Activity				
Description	Code	FY02	FY03	Notes:
Fatal MVA Involving Moose	9501	2	1	MVA = Motor Vehicle Accident
MVA with Injuries Involving Moose	9503	60	51	
MVA with Injuries Involving Moose (Comm Veh)	9503V	0	1	Commercial Vehicle
MVA-Damage to Vehicle Only with Moose	9505	731	651	
MVA-Damage Only Comm. Vehicle with Moose	9505V	21	11	Commercial Vehicle
MVA-with Department Vehicle with Moose	9512	2	4	
Vehicle in Ditch/Tfc Hazards Due to Moose	9576/9570	21	10	
		837	729	Total

Other People / Moose-Related Case Activity				
Description	Code	FY02	FY03	Notes:
Misc. Calls Ref. Moose	8027	48	27	
Moose Attacking Humans Complaints	8710	9	8	
Moose Nuisance Complaints	8712	74	59	
Calls Related to Defense of Life and Property	8721	10	6	
Complaints Concerning Dogs Harrassing Moose	8762	45	20	
Complaints of Illegal Feeding of Moose	8766	17	5	
Suspicious Circumstances Concerning Moose	9549	15	21	
Assist to Other Agencies Concerning Moose	9605	17	24	
Misc.Moose Related Offenses/Complaints	9610	100	60	
		335	230	Total

The Above Data does not include the Municipality of Anchorage

Numbers of moose donated to charities as result of motor vehicle accidents or other similar circumstances. These numbers are *September 1, 2003 to present.*

Municipality of Anchorage	112
Mat-Su Valley, Talkeetna areas	307
Soldotna/Keani Area	194
	706 Total



March 2, 2004

Gary Olson  
Chairman  
Alaska Moose Federation  
PO Box 231028  
Anchorage, AK 99523

Re: Senate Bill #329

Dear Mr. Olson:

The Alaska Zoo has worked with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) for over 35 years – caring for orphaned moose calves, among other things. We have developed the expertise needed to care for young calves - preparing them for transport to the Moose Research Center on the Kenai Peninsula, or to zoos Outside.

The zoo recently upgraded its' moose pens to provide additional flexibility and capacity – allowing us to keep more moose in more areas. One reason we built the pens as we did was the hope that the zoo will participate in research projects valuable to the community of scientists studying moose.

We are ready to partner with ADFG, and groups authorized by the department – like the Alaska Moose Federation – to participate in the management of our moose population. The zoo can provide facilities and personnel to assist in that management.

Gary – you, or other interested parties, are welcome to call me at 346 – 2133 for more information concerning our willingness and ability to work with moose management. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Louis (Tex) Edwards  
Director, Alaska Zoo

# STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

BOARD OF GAME

FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 25526  
JUNEAU, AK 99802-5526  
PHONE: (907) 465-4110  
FAX: (907) 465-6094

March 10, 2004

Senator Con Bunde  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol (506)  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: SB 329 Control of Nuisance Moose

Dear Senator Bunde,

The Alaska Board of Game wishes to note their unanimous support for the concept of relocating moose from urban areas where they are a nuisance to areas where moose are scarce.

We urge careful consideration of this concept and remain hopeful that it will be yet another tool for rebuilding ungulate populations. Further, we urge crafting of the legislation to allow adequate oversight by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game while minimizing cost to the department.

Thank you for considering this recommendation from the Board of Game

Respectfully yours,

Mike Fleagle,  
Chairman, Alaska Board of Game

# STATE OF ALASKA

Frank H Murkowski, Governor

## Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee

Bob Churchill, Chair  
3415 Wentworth  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
Home: 279-8927  
Work: 261-5421  
FAX: 272-7675  
Email: rock4@gci.net

Dear Senator Bunde:

The Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee met on March 16, 2004 as normally scheduled. Mr. Gary Olson, Chairman of the Alaska Moose Federation, testified regarding Senate Bill 329, which you have sponsored. We reviewed the content of the bill and after a discussion voted in the majority to send you a letter in support of the objectives of the bill.

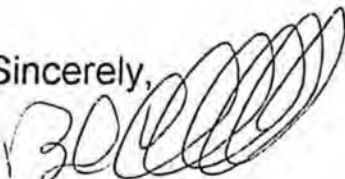
Our discussion focused, as did Mr. Olson's testimony, on safety related concerns generated primarily by incidents of vehicles colliding with moose. Mr. Olson clearly testified that the total cost of relocating these animals would be approximately \$1000.00 per animal and an upward estimate would be that 250 animals per year would require relocation.

*no. of  
moose*

If these incidents can be significantly reduced and the safety of people in the Anchorage area can be improved by relocating moose at a reasonable cost, we support effective efforts made to achieve this goal.

As you know other efforts have been made to achieve these same results, however they have failed due to a lack of implementation.

Sincerely,



Bob Churchill

Email:

Non Constituent Supports

BILL#: SB 329 NUISANCE MOOSE

SUBJECT:

MESSAGE: Please pass this bill. As the Chairman of the Central Kuskokwim Fish and Game Advisory Committee we support this bill.

DISTRIBUTION: 12

Lawrence F Ctibor

Po Box 1201

Po Box 1201

Bethel AK, 99559

Lower Kuskokwim SD

Email: larry\_ctibor@lksd.org



# Municipality of Anchorage

P.O. Box 196650 • Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650 • Telephone: (907) 343-4431 • Fax: (907) 343-4499 <http://www.anumut.ak.gov>

*Mayor Mark Begich*

Office of the Mayor

March 9, 2004

Gary Olson, Chairman  
Alaska Moose Federation  
P.O. Box 231028  
Anchorage, AK 99523

Dear Mr. Olson,

This letter is to show my support for the intention of Senate Bill 329 and the relocation of "nuisance" moose from in and around the Municipality of Anchorage to a more rural setting.

I appreciate the effort of your organization to try to address the growing problem of moose encounters with cars and people that often result in injury for the human, the animals, and also economic costs resulting from damage to property and medical bills.

Public safety is a primary goal of my administration, and efforts to reduce the potential negative consequences of interactions with these magnificent animals should be carefully considered.

My understanding is relocation of the moose will be done with great concern for the health of the animal, and that any costs associated with the program will be assumed by your group or similar private organizations. My support is based on both of those considerations.

Thank you for stepping forward to take on an issue of concern to myself and many Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Mark Begich  
Mayor



# Municipality of Anchorage

4501 Bragaw Street • Anchorage, Alaska 99507-1599 • Telephone (907) 786-8500 • <http://www.muni.org>



Mayor Mark Begich

## Anchorage Police Department

February 26, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

The Anchorage Police Department offers its general support to the ideas presented by the Alaska Moose Federation through Senate Bill 329.

The Anchorage Police Department recognizes the efforts of the Alaska Moose Federation to maintain the quality and quantity of Alaska's moose populations. Clearly, any efforts to mitigate the potential negative consequences of moose-person interactions also support our primary goals as well. The Anchorage Police Department is currently required to respond to hundreds of moose related incidents a year.


Without having an opportunity to fully evaluate the costs and externalities associated with active intervention plans such as transplanting moose away from the Anchorage Bowl area, we are unable to offer complete unqualified endorsement of SB329. However, we do endorse a sincere investigation into this proposal.

*no endorsement*

Additionally, the Anchorage Police Department supports the passive measures outlined by the Alaska Moose Federation, which included:

- feasibility study of "wildlife-overpasses"
- directional fencing
- wildlife trail development
- other diversionary methods

Please feel free to contact my assistant, Officer Derek Hsieh at 907-786-2477 with your questions.

  
Walt Monegan  
Chief of Police

*Community, Security, Prosperity*



**Anchorage  
School  
District**

4600 DeBarr Road  
P O. Box 196614  
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6614  
(907) 742-4000

**SCHOOL BOARD**

Jake Metcalfe  
President

Tim Steele  
Vice President

Mary Marks  
Clerk

Macon Roberts  
Treasurer

Jeff Friedman

Crystal Kennedy

John Steiner

**SUPERINTENDENT**

Carol Comeau

March 4, 2004

Alaska Moose Federation  
PO Box 231028  
Anchorage, AK 99523

Attn. Gary Olson  
RE: SB 329

Dear Mr. Olson:

This letter is to confirm my support for your initiative for relocating moose away from our school grounds and in our neighborhoods near schools in the Anchorage School District. We are having increasing numbers of problems for our students who walk to and from school in various neighborhoods, and our principals and teachers report that moose are getting to be more aggressive and a nuisance for our students and staff.

We have had excellent support from Rick Sinnott, and others in protecting our students when we call his department, but this proposed nuisance moose relocation program would insure our students and staff are safe.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Comeau  
Superintendent

cc School Board Members  
Senator Con Bunde  
Larry Wiget, Executive Director, Public Affairs

DIANNE M. KELLER  
MAYOR

---

CITY OF WASILLA  
290 E. Herning Ave.  
Wasilla, AK 99654-7091  
Phone: (907) 373-9055  
Fax: (907) 373-9096

February 25, 2004

Senator Con Bunde  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol Bldg., Rm. 506  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Bunde:

This letter is written in support of Senate Bill 329 relating to the relocation of "nuisance" moose in urban Alaska to alternative suitable habitat where in rural Alaska where the moose and people will benefit.

The ever-growing moose population continues to pose a significant risk to the health, safety and/or economic well being of people in the area. The populations in cities throughout the state are growing, thus forcing more moose onto our roads, trails, school grounds, and neighborhoods at an alarming rate. Human beings have been placed in danger by the increase in the moose population, and the moose are suffering as well. DOT studies show an increasing amount of moose/vehicle collisions throughout Alaska.

People from all over the state will benefit from this one bill. Public safety is paramount in the cities where the moose populations are at a dangerous surplus and the Alaskan lifestyle is paramount throughout rural Alaska where moose are very scarce. The ability to transplant moose to rural Alaska to help rebuild existing populations seems to make good sense. If organizations like the Alaska Moose Federation are allowed to move moose out of harms way, both the moose and people will benefit.

I look forward to seeing this legislation pass. Thank you for your support of SB 329.

Sincerely,



Mayor Dianne M. Keller  
City of Wasilla

cc: Alaska Moose Federation



THOMAS R. PLOOY, CLU, Agent  
Auto - Life - Health - Home and Business

2900 Boniface Parkway, Suite 100 Anchorage, Alaska 99504  
Bus: 907-333-6575 Fax: 907-333-1186 Res: 907-248-9186

March 10, 2004

Gary Olson  
Alaska Moose Federation  
PO Box 231028  
Anchorage, AK 99523

Dear Gary,

I have been a State Farm agent for over 31 years, and have seen the property damage and body injury a moose can do when they collide with my client's vehicle.

Your proposal to relocate moose is a win-win situation for everyone. The policyholder wins, the insurance company wins, the police department wins, and most importantly, the moose wins, by being relocated to a rural area.

I strongly support SB 329 and look forward to seeing this legislation passed.

Sincerely,

Tom Plooy

---

**ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, INC.**

1577 C Street, Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
907-274-3611 Fax 907-276-7989

March 15, 2004

The Honorable Scott Ogan, Chair  
State Senate Resources Committee  
State Capitol, Room 103  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182  
VIA FACSIMILE: 907-465-3265

RE: S. 329

Dear Chairman Ogan:

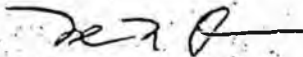
We understand that the State Senate Resources Committee is considering on acting on S. 329, an Act relating to control of nuisance moose, in the near future. If and when the committee considers S. 329, please consider voting in favor of this bill if and only if the State of Alaska will not use its limited financial resources to implement the intent of this bill. Considering the fiscal status of the State of Alaska, we believe that Alaska's limited fiscal resources can be best used for education, health and welfare purposes before they are used to relocate moose.

You may want to consider authorizing the people living in an area where the nuisance moose are located with the right to legally harvest such animals for consumption. This may be the most fiscal means of dealing with nuisance moose, whatever they may be.

Attached, herewith, please find a copy of a resolution that the delegate to the 2003 AFN Convention considered and passed supporting the efforts of Alaska Moose Federation in enhancing the moose population.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nelson N. Angapak, Sr.  
Vice-President

CC: The Honorable Georgianna Lincoln

Attachment: AFN Convention Resolution 03-78

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, INC.

2003 ANNUAL CONVENTION

RESOLUTION 03-78

TITLE: IN SUPPORT OF PURPOSE AND EFFORTS OF THE ALASKA MOOSE FEDERATION

WHEREAS: Alaska has many organizations dedicated to maintaining the welfare of certain animal species such as ducks, grouse, wild sheep, elk, bears and fish but until recently, none for the benefit of moose; and

WHEREAS: Urban dwellers seem to think that moose populations across the State are all doing well simply because they see so many in the streets of Anchorage, when in actuality many moose populations in rural Alaska have been experiencing significant declines over the last decade; and

WHEREAS: Other nations in the world that are much smaller than Alaska, with more limited space and habitat successfully produce more moose for human harvest than Alaska currently has for its total number of moose; and

WHEREAS: Moose are extremely important as a basic food source in supporting the seasonal round of harvest that constitutes the subsistence way of life; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Federation of Natives supports and endorses the purpose of the Alaska Moose Federation in their efforts to rebuild and enhance moose populations across the State; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution should be forwarded to the State of Alaska, RAC and the Federal Subsistence Board.

SUBMITTED BY: ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

CONVENTION ACTION: SUSPENSION OF RULES/PASSED





1577 "C" Street, Suite 304, Anchorage, Alaska 99504 • (907) 274-5400 • FAX (907) 263-9971 • Email: avi@ruralak.org

March 2, 2004

Gary Olson, Executive Director  
Alaska Moose Federation  
PO Box 231028  
Anchorage, AK 99523

Re: Senate Bill 329

Dear Mr. Olson:

On behalf of Alaska Village Initiatives, I would like to express our support for Senate Bill 329. Senate Bill 329 is a straightforward approach which, if successful, would greatly benefit public safety in urban areas such as Anchorage and Fairbanks. We understand that the Anchorage School District has identified moose as a safety concern for young children attending school, and we support efforts that would increase their safety and well-being.

We are also interested in where the moose will be transported. Many rural areas of the state have moose populations which are insufficient to support pressures from hunting and predation, and supplementing their population would have positive effects.

While the idea of transporting moose is very complex, we are hopeful that scientific and technical expertise would be sufficient to accomplish the task with the highest rate of success and with the most efficient means available.

Please contact us if you have any questions, or if there are ways we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Tom Harris  
President/CEO



# Ninilchik Traditional Council

P.O. Box 39070

Ninilchik, Alaska 99639

Ph: 907 567-3313 / Fx: 907 567-3308

E-mail:

Web Site: [www.ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov](http://www.ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov)

---

March 8, 2004

Alaska Moose Federation  
PO Box 231028  
Anchorage, Alaska 99523

Dear Mr. Olsen:

On behalf of the Ninilchik Traditional Council, the Federally and State of Alaska recognized governing body of the Ninilchik Village Tribe, I am sending you this letter to show the support for Senate Bill No. 329 addressing the control and transplanted of nuisance moose. We feel that as good custodians, and in the interest of public safety, we should proactively address these issues.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

 / for:

Ivan Encelewski  
NTC Executive Director

c: file

**Main Identity**

---

**From:** "Maggie Strobbe" <maggiedcs@alaska.com>  
**To:** <molson@gci.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2004 8:17 PM  
**Subject:** mooseattack

March 10, 2004

Dear Gary,

How odd that you should call us tonight, for just this afternoon I took our daughter, Hannah, to see a counselor regarding the moose attack last summer. She had been asking to see someone that could help her with her fear and anxiety of the woods now, something that I feel will definitely impact our summers up here for years to come. I sat and listened to her story yet once again and am, as always, amazed that she is still with us.

On June 9, 2003 (about) I was flying back from Atlanta, GA and my husband was at work. My daughter's grandmother was babysitting and Hannah, age 10, and her friend were walking down a well used trail in the lot next to our house, about 20 yards from the edge of our yard, something that they had done numerous times. My husband is an avid outdoorsman and we had cautioned her many times that the woods weren't safe in the spring, but being kids, they were oblivious. Hannah was leading and they apparently walked past a cow with a calf that was bedded down and hidden in the long grass. The moose never saw them until the last moment and they never saw her until it was too late. The cow rushed my daughter and knocked her down, trampling her as she went over, then she turned around and trampled her again. Hannah then saved her own life by curling into a ball and staying there. She listened until she heard the cow call her calf and left. Then got up and walked out of the woods with a broken collar-bone, a compression fracture to the back of her skull and an ear that was practically torn from her head. By that time a neighbor had called 911 and her grandmother was struggling to get to her. Within minutes the fire department, police and paramedics were at our house and treating her (no doubt that OUP house is in the 911 database). She was rushed to Providence Hospital where the doctors sewed her ear back on and she was x-rayed and sent home in a sling for her collarbone. Several days later, we took her back for a CAT scan of her skull because she was having dizzy spells and headaches. Luckily, there was no bleeding under her skull where she was kicked, but we were eventually forced to have surgery to plate her collarbone. The force of the moose's first attack had not only broken the bone, but also pushed one end of it behind the muscle so that surgical intervention was necessary. I feel absolutely that our daughter could have died, if just one of those kicks was less glancing and more direct.

This is an accident without guilty parties. The moose was simply protecting her calf and my daughter and her friend were simply walking down a trail. I have lived here 24 years and feel that the moose have transformed from an occasional amusing spectacle to a dangerous population. If I had so wanted a more rustic lifestyle we would certainly not live in Alaska's largest city. We can't hunt them in the Anchorage area, so what are our options to protect our children and ourselves?

Thank you for trying to find a win-win solution to this escalating problem.

Sincerely,

Maggie & Steve Strobbe  
maggiedcs@aol.com  
907-346-40094

3/10/2004

## PERMISSION TO USE PHOTOGRAPH & QUOTE

I authorize The Alaska Moose Federation and/or Gary Olson to use photographs of my daughter, Hannah Strobbe, a minor, and the quote from me for educational or promotional purposes in conjunction with senate bill #329. The photographs or the quote may not be used for profit without my express permission. I understand that I will not be paid or rewarded for providing this authorization.

Signature:

Margaret D.C. Strobbe

Printed Name:

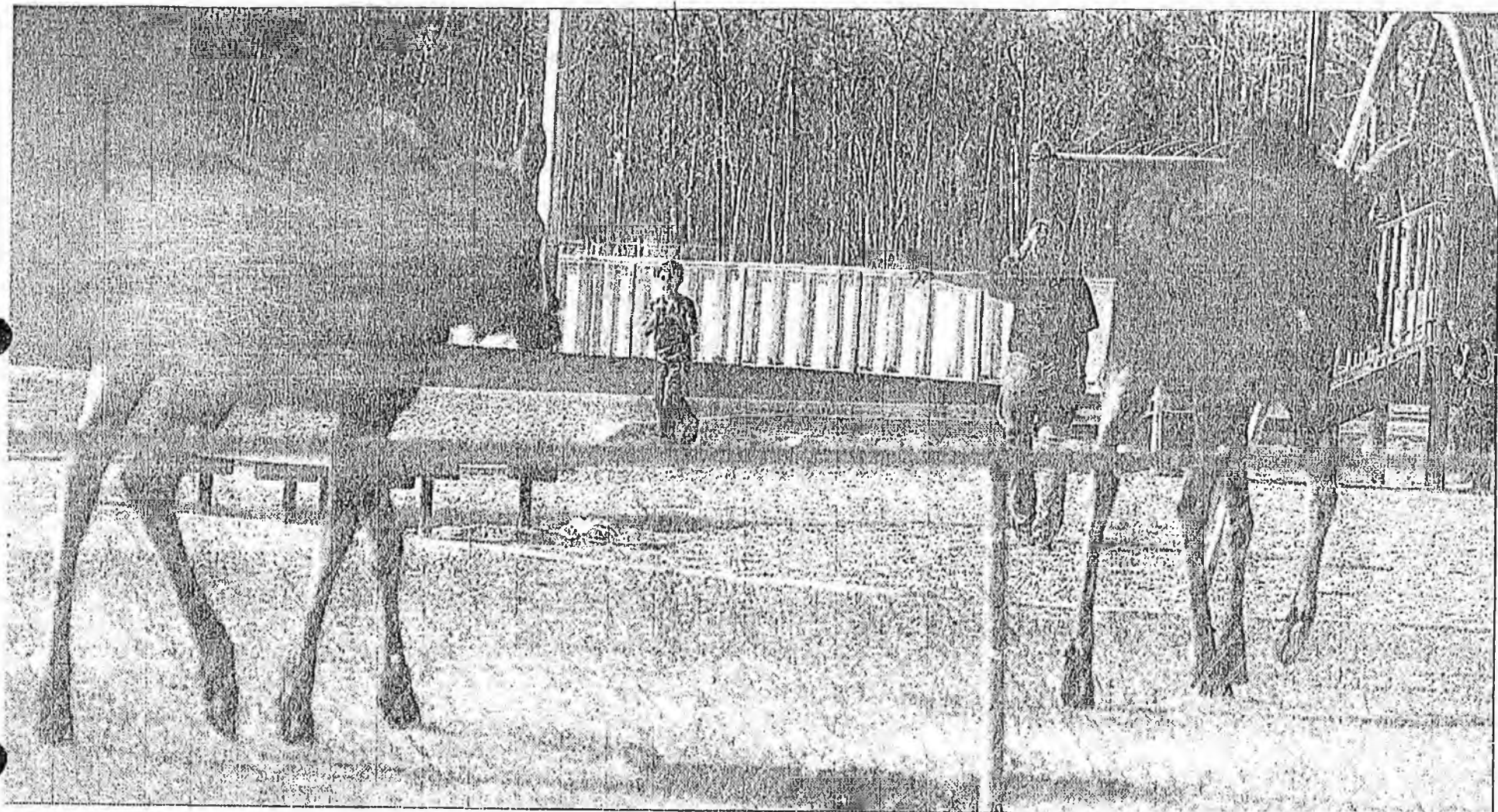
MARGARET D.C. STROBBE

Date:

3/12/04

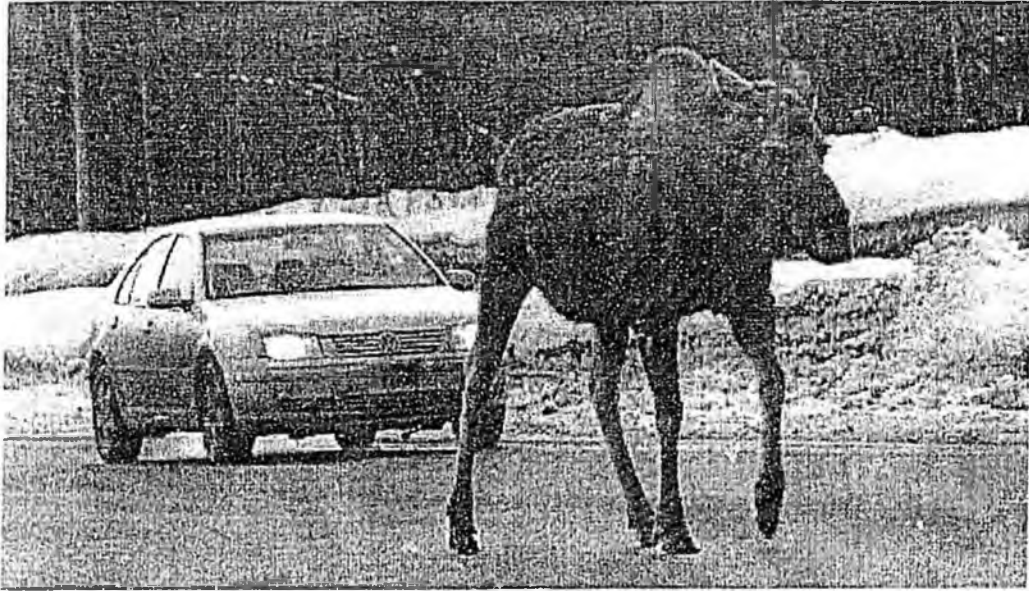


*Picture of Hannah 2 days after moose attack.*



BOB HALLINEN / Daily News archive

moose and her calf walk through the Turnagain Elementary School playground as children are herded into the school.



# Anchorage Daily News

Friday, February 10, 2004 ALASKA'S NEWSPAPER www.adn.com

## FAIRBANKS MOOSE COMES TO THE END OF THE LINE



ERIC ENGMAN / Fairbanks Daily News Miner

A bull moose lunged as Golden Valley Electric Association linemen Walt Becker, right, tried to free it from an old electric line Saturday afternoon in Fairbanks. Alaska Bureau of Wildlife Enforcement officers and GVEA workers tracked the moose as it ran through residential yards and into a wooded area, dragging the line behind it. The moose was shot and killed after it turned and charged a wildlife officer.

# SUNDAY

TV News • Books • Outdoors • Science

Final Edition

# Anchorage Daily News

February 24, 2002

ALASKA'S NEWS PAPER

## Moose carnage prompts concern

■ **PROPOSAL:** Group aims to curb collisions, conserve ungulates.

By **DOUG O'HARRA**  
Anchorage Daily News

Alaskans have been crashing cars and trucks into moose about five or six times per day since the start of the year.

The carnage includes a tragedy near Mile 105 of the Parks Highway on Jan. 5. John J. High of Trapper Creek died after his Subaru Legacy smashed into a moose with hardly enough time to tap the brakes. A family man survived by his wife and two young children, High was driving home from work.

That same day, drivers near Willow, Sutton, Palmer, Wasilla, Kenai and Seward also plowed into moose, according to the Alaska State Troopers. These were among more than 230 moose knocked down on rural highways since Jan. 1, about 100 more than the same period last year.

At least 16 people have been hospitalized or hurt, while hundreds have limped their cars home with dented fenders and shattered glass.

In Anchorage, where deep snow has driven an estimated 1,000 moose into neighborhoods, parks and streets, more than 120 moose have been killed since summer.

The specter of a huge brown animal lurking at the fringe of headlights continues to be the white-knuckle nightmare of every Alaska driver: 1,000 pounds of meat and bone threatening to bolt across your path.

Driving highways becomes a seasonal moose roulette that annually kills one to three people and injures at least 100 more. Last March, a 13-year-old boy died when a car driven by his mother crashed into a moose dashing across the Glenn Highway near the weigh station.

Even when no one gets hurt, moose collisions cost millions of dollars in property damage and lost time, and leaves hundreds of wild animals mangled by the

*See Back Page, MOOSE*

# MOOSE: Group proposes transporting ungulates from Anchorage Bowl

Continued from A-1

roadside.

Despite fences, lights and periodic campaigns to alert drivers or get them to slow down, the annual toll has averaged 650 across the state and 155 inside Anchorage since the early 1990s.

Biologists and wildlife advocates say the current situation unnecessarily risks lives while wasting one of the state's most valued food resources and wildlife icons.

Most of the moose kills in the Anchorage Bowl are from cars — not predators, said Anchorage area biologist Rick Sinnott, with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. "We salvage as many of the moose as possible for human food, but I'd guess dozens die that aren't found until it's too late to salvage them."

Each accident can easily cost thousands of dollars, often more than the vehicle is worth, said Nancy Carpenter, spokeswoman for State Farm Insurance in Alaska.

"Our claims adjusters look at anywhere from three to six moose-car type collisions per week in the winter," she said. "Because of the stature of the animal, their height and their long legs, they tend to get tossed onto the car, doing significant damage to hoods and windshields."

But a new statewide group wants to sponsor an aggressive program to conserve moose and head off accidents. The Alaska Moose Federation wants to find a way to transplant up to 250 moose per year out of Anchorage into rural areas with open habitat.

A "nuisance moose" bill introduced this month by Sen. Con Bunde, R-Anchorage, would authorize that.

The group proposes to raise money for research or to help build structures to keep moose off roads. With a board of advisers that includes the governor and the state's congressional delegation, the federation hopes to launch a moose movement that will include youth moose troops. Its Web site is [www.growmoremoose.org](http://www.growmoremoose.org).

"What we're in right now is absolute genocide, with everyone in Mat-Su and Anchorage and the Kenai playing Russian roulette at night with their vehicles," said Gary Olson, the group's organizer and chairman. "Regardless of your perspective,

it's unacceptable."

At the same time, state and federal biologists have been pushing detailed studies of new road projects to find ways to reduce moose-car crashes.

Planners working on an extension of Bragaw Road across the Campbell Creek bottomland in Anchorage are also trying to find some recipe of fences, lighting and underpasses to keep moose off the road.

"It's a big issue on this project," said Kristen Hansen, with Dow Engineers.

The Alaska experience with moose mirrors a growing crisis in some Lower 48 cities with exploding deer populations. In a sense, the phenomenon is part of a broad ecological shift that allows human-tolerant animals to thrive near settlements without fear of natural predators. With habitat crisscrossed by roads, these animals must negotiate traffic to feed or bed down.

All these factors converge in Anchorage. Park-side boulevards like Tudor Road and Lake Otis Parkway, and Hillside collectors like Abbott and O'Malley and Rabbit Creek roads, concentrate the problem.

"It's a bad death zone in town because the moose are moving down through from the hills and coming out of (Far North) Bicentennial Park," said assistant state biologist Jessy Coltrane. "In order for moose to reach habitat, they have to cross a lot of high-speed, high-volume roads, and there's really no crossing structures."

Through the end of January, Anchorage drivers had killed 28 more moose than they had by the same time last winter. Since October, Sinnott and Coltrane have shot 20 crippled moose and found a couple of dozen others dead from unknown causes.

"It could be that they're dying of internal injuries, that they got hit by a car," Coltrane said. "Or it could be that they're feeding on garbage and they're getting blocked up."

Motorists north and south of Anchorage are also smashing into moose more often than usual, though the Alaska Railroad has reduced crashes from the 1990s. Through last week, the death toll was 286 moose on Mat-Su roads, and 276 moose on the Kenai, according to state biologists. Trains have killed 57 moose through Friday, including eight inside Anchorage and 27 in Mat-Su, said

chief engineer Tom Brooks.

"We're probably on track to have either the second or third highest road kill numbers since we started keeping records," said Mat-Su-area state biologist Gino Del Frate.

Finding a long-term solution to the problem means finding where moose migrate during winter and why, preferably by tracking moose with collars, said Kenai-area biologist Jeff Selinger. That would allow planners to design specific fixes for specific stretches of roads, whether fencing, lights, by-passes or changing vegetation.

High moose numbers in Anchorage and reports of low moose numbers in some rural areas inspired Olson to propose moving the city moose out of town. He argues that Anchorage could serve as a kind of moose incubator.

"We need to take moose where they are a liability right now and move them into an area where they are an asset, and that's something that's never been done before," he said. "This could go a long way to heal the rural-urban divide in this state."

But Sinnott, responsible for managing the city's moose, said transplanting moose presents logistical problems. Catching so many moose would be a full-time job that would become increasingly difficult after "the dumb ones" got snatched. Only certified people working under the supervision of a veterinarian can use the drugs that knock out and revive moose.

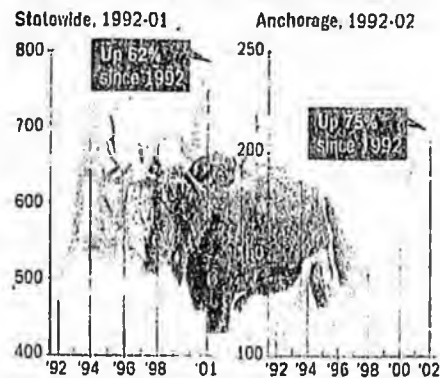
And then there would be other matters to resolve: Should moose be immobilized for hours, or allowed to wake up inside a trailer? Could an adult moose ride in an airplane safely? Would city-born moose survive when faced for the first time with wolves or an unfamiliar forest.

Still, it's worth thinking about, Sinnott said. "And it may be worth doing some limited experimentation."

The federation organizers are "very sincere and their heart is in the right place," he added. "They just need to do the right thing, and I think they're willing to do that. But I don't think we know what the right thing is right now."

Meanwhile the carnage marches on. On Feb. 12, an ordinary winter Thursday, drivers in Livengood, Nenana, Richardson, Tazlina, Palmer

## Moose-vehicle collisions rise



NOTE: 2002 statewide total's not available  
Source: Department of Transportation

RON ENGSTROM / Anchorage Daily News

and Wasilla killed moose, according to the Alaska State Troopers. On Abbott Road of the Anchorage Hillside, a yearling bull leapt in front of a Dodge pickup heading east from Lake Otis Parkway at 6:17 a.m.

The result was typical: the truck sustained damage to the right front fender; the moose broke its legs, couldn't get up and was shot by police. The driver, Anchorage resident Travis Parry, was unhurt and received no citation, police said.

"The problem is that moose are so dark, and that area there is not well lit," said patrol officer Michael Busey. "If the moose walked out in front of him, there's not much he could do."

The moose was so mangled that only 40 pounds of meat could be salvaged for hamburger for two needy families, said Troy Nicholson, an Army National Guard sergeant who collected the carcass an hour later.

"I'm sure the vehicle just saw it at the last minute," said Nicholson, who himself ran into moose with his truck three years ago in Turnagain Pass, sustaining \$13,000 in damage.

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