



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Headquarters

1255 West 8th Street
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
Main: 907.465.4190
Fax: 907.465.6142

RC 012

January 8, 2015

An Agenda Change Request (ACR) has been submitted to the Alaska Board of Game requesting to change 5 AAC 85.015 (a) Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear, Unit 6D. Under the Board's ACR policy, the Board will accept an ACR only:

- A) for a conservation purpose or reason;
- B) to correct an error in a regulation; or
- C) to correct an effect on a hunt that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted.

The board will not accept an ACR that is predominantly allocative in nature in the absence of new information that is found by the board to be compelling. [5 AAC 92.005 (a) (2-3)].

With respect to ACR policy acceptance criteria:

- (A) Black bear harvests increased in Unit 6D from the late 1990s to 2007. The Board has taken modest regulatory changes (2005 and 2009) to address the concern of unsustainable harvest black bear harvest in Unit 6D. The number of harvested bears in Unit 6D has declined steadily since 2007 and the department has conservation concerns. Harvests in RY12 and RY13 were respectively 25% and 47% below the previous regulatory year. Data for RY13 was unavailable by the proposal (May) deadline. Additionally, anecdotal reports from a diverse group of users suggest a decline in bears during the last decade. The percentage of females in the harvest has increased the last three regulatory years and has been above management objectives in every year since 2006. Three of the last five years have had exceptional weather that may have impacted black bear behavior, availability and possibly survival. The Department believes this new information regarding a conservation concern warrants the Board's consideration of this issue out of cycle.
- (B) The department is unaware of an error in regulation.
- (C) The department is unaware of any unforeseen effects on the hunt that should be addressed in regulation.

The Department recommends that the board consider means for addressing the sustained interest in hunting black bears in Unit 6D and the delay in receiving accurate reports of harvest. Currently, the hunt proceeds with unlimited participation because it is managed with a general season harvest ticket



Addressee's name

- 2 -

Date

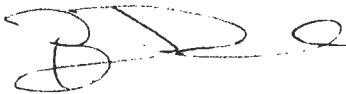
and successful hunters must have their bear sealed within 30 days of harvest. A registration hunt would allow for timely monitoring of hunt effort, harvest and location of animals harvested. Reports of harvested bears could be required within 5 days of kill (hunters would still have 30 days to seal bears).

There is a positive customary and traditional use finding for Unit 6 black bear and an amount reasonably necessary for subsistence of 80–120 black bears in all of Unit 6.

Delayed information precluded the department and the public from evaluating the magnitude of the decline in harvest in RY12. The RY13 drop in harvest combined with the sustained decline in harvest since 2007 suggests the need for taking action outside the normal cycle. The department is preparing an emergency order to reduce the harvest of female bears in spring 2015.

This is the second of three Agenda Change Requests for black bears in Unit 6D. The department recommends accepting them as a package and if accepted, department will provide analysis on each prior to the meeting where the resulting proposals will be addressed. The department will also provide a management strategy to reduce the percentage of females in the harvest and closely monitor the effects of this new strategy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bruce Dale', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Bruce Dale
Acting Director
Division of Wildlife Conservation

ACR 2 – Establish a registration hunt for black bears in Unit 6D.

SUBMITTED BY: Bradford von Wichman

MEETING ACR SUBMITTED FOR: Work Session

CITE THE REGULATION THAT WILL BE CHANGED IF THIS ACR IS HEARD.
5 AAC 85.015(a). Hunting seasons and bag limits for black bear, Unit 6D.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU WOULD LIKE THE BOARD TO ADDRESS? STATE IN DETAIL THE NATURE OF THE CURRENT PROBLEM. Black bear numbers have dramatically declined in Prince William Sound (PWS). Black bear harvests have been declining steadily since 2007 after a prolonged period of harvest that exceeded recommended levels. Last season's harvest was the lowest since 1996 and is below management objectives. For seven of the last eight regulatory years, the percent harvest of females has exceeded management objectives. Anecdotal reports from many diverse and reliable sources suggest there has been a substantial decline in the number of black bear in Prince William Sound.

WHAT SOLUTION DO YOU PREFER? Establish a registration hunt for black bear in Prince William Sound. This will provide a tool to limit effort and curtail the season when harvest levels have been reached.

STATE IN DETAIL HOW THIS ACR MEETS THE CRITERIA STATED ABOVE.

- a) **for a conservation purpose or reason:** The black bear harvest in Unit 6D is currently unsustainable. Supporting data was unavailable in time for the normal board proposal cycle.
- b) **to correct an error in regulation:** None.
- c) **to correct an effect on a hunt that was unforeseen when a regulation was adopted:** None.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THIS PROBLEM IS NOT SOLVED PRIOR TO THE REGULAR CYCLE? The harvest will continue at an unsustainable level to the detriment of the population.

STATE WHY YOUR ACR IS NOT PREDOMINANTLY ALLOCATIVE. All hunters would require a permit to participate.

IF THIS REQUEST IS ALLOCATIVE, STATE THE NEW INFORMATION THAT COMPELS THE BOARD TO CONSIDER AN ALLOCATIVE PROPOSAL OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR CYCLE.

STATE YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ISSUE THAT IS THE SUBJECT OF THIS ACR. Outfitter guide, charter business owner/operator.

STATE WHETHER THIS ACR HAS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE, EITHER AS A PROPOSAL OR AS AN ACR, AND IF SO, DURING WHICH BOARD OF GAME MEETING. Do not believe this proposal has been considered before for this area. Please consider this ACR for the Southcentral Region meeting in March, the majority of participants in the hunt are from that region.

