

ALASKA BOARD OF GAME
Emergency Teleconference
January 27, 2009
Summary of Actions

The Alaska Board of Game met by teleconference on January 27, 2009 to consider the following emergency petitions:

- 1) Moose hunting season extension bag limit change (taking of any moose) for Unit 18, submitted by the Emmonak Tribal Council
- 2) Moose season extension for Unit 9E submitted by village residents from Ugashik, Egegik and Pilot Point.

Six of seven board members were present.

Petition #1: Moose season extension and bag limit change to “any moose”, submitted by the Emmonak Tribal Council.

Action: Allowed the Department of Fish to use emergency order authority to extend the season to February 28 for taking antlered bull or calf.

Discussion: Much of the deliberation focused on the criteria for an “emergency” as defined under the Joint Board Petition Policy, 5 AAC 96.625. The policy reads “*an emergency is an unforeseen, unexpected event that either threatens a fish or game resource, or an unforeseen, unexpected resource situation where a biologically allowable resource harvest would be precluded by delayed regulatory action and such delay would be significantly burdensome to the petitioners because the resource would be unavailable in the future.*”

Board members expressed mixed opinions as to whether the circumstances in Unit 18 met the emergency criteria. Specifically, whether the resource would be unavailable in the future and if the circumstances constitute an event that threatens the resource. . Board members were very concerned for the residents in the area, but they agreed that the petition policy limits their ability to declare an emergency for reasons such as poor weather conditions and high fuel prices. Board members questioned the department about the opportunity for hunting moose that was available during the year including the length of the fall and winter seasons, the level of moose harvest under both seasons, the weather conditions and access to the moose; and the dependency by users on the resource.

The Office of Subsistence Management informed the board members that the Federal Subsistence Board approved a special action request to extend the moose season for “any moose” until February 28. Knowing that, the board voted against the finding of an emergency, but gave approval to the Department of Fish and Game to use emergency order authority to extend the season to February 28, (mirroring the federal season) and for taking moose calves and bulls with antlers.

Petition #2: Extend the moose season in Unit 9E, submitted by residents of Ugashik, Egegik and Pilot Point Petition.

Action: Denied

Discussion: The board did not pass a finding of emergency for the petition. During their deliberation, the board referenced the discussion on the previous petition concerning the emergency criteria as defined under the Joint Board Petition Policy. Board members were sympathetic for the residents in the area facing poor weather and high fuel prices, but agreed the board does not have the legal authority to take action on the petition. Concern was expressed over the low moose numbers in the area and the potential for cows to be harvested if the bull season was extended. The board noted that the federal season is open until the end of the month so there is opportunity to take moose.