

Alaska Board of Game
Region IV
February 13, 2015

Dear Board Members:

I am asking the Alaska Board of Game to write a letter to Governor Walker and our state representatives requesting two changes in our State's policies regarding big game commercial operators (guides), and license fees for Alaska residents and nonresidents. The problem can be summed up with one word – ALLOCATION.

1.) The guide requirement for nonresidents needs to be eliminated. At one time this may have been a tool for the State to create more income but today it actually costs the State money. This is the only State with this requirement and it forces nonresidents to hire a guide for sheep, goats, and brown bears. Wyoming does have a requirement that nonresidents have a resident or an outfitter with them only in a Wilderness Areas, but this is not required in the rest of the State. The Alaska guide requirement borders on being a State subsidy for guides when nonresidents are being forced to hire them and the rest of the States don't require this.

2.) License fees for nonresidents need to be raised to align with what out-of- state hunters are being charged in other States. Resident Alaskans also need to contribute financially and pay for the tags they use. Most States charge their residents between 7 and 11% of nonresident tag fees. If a resident can't afford to contribute they should just be given a tag – that's what's happening now with no fees.

I will go into more detail below:

When the guide requirement is removed, the state can put all nonresidents on permits and give them the option to purchase "preference points." A preference point increases your chance of being drawn in subsequent years. This is how most of the western states manage their fees and their tags, which are generally much more expensive than Alaska. A nonresident moose tag in Alaska is \$400, and Montana charges \$812, for an elk tag and \$542, for a deer tag. This doesn't include the cost of their preference points or higher fees for trophy areas. Preference points are generally \$30 - \$50 per specie per year.

With lost oil revenues the State should look at common sense ways to fund different departments and look at what other states require. The Department of Fish and Game would get a tremendous spike in revenue with restructured tag fees and matching Pittman-Robertson funds. Maybe they could be self-sufficient.

With the guide requirement eliminated and restructured tag fees we could fund our wildlife management like other states. I am sure that parents seeing cuts in education would rally behind the idea of departments becoming more self-sufficient so teacher/student ratios, and school programs don't take more severe cuts. We are all going to have to pitch-in but we need our representative in Juneau to lead the way.

Sincerely,

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