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To: Alaska Board of Game  
RE: Proposal 21, Unit 1D Black Bear Bait Delay

Dear Board of Game,

Thank you very much for your time and efforts in protecting our states wildlife resources. Your job is immense and often controversial. I applaud you for your willingness to be involved.

I believe that the local community subsistence users and black bears are better served by not changing the season.

Before you is a proposal to reduce black bear baiting season to two weeks in unit 1D. This proposal is intended to reduce the conflict between black bear hunters and brown bear hunters, specifically to ensure brown bear hunters full range of Unit 1D during their season without the worry of hunting near black bear bait sites. It is understandable that brown bear hunters, especially commercial guides, would be concerned with competition from other hunters. I do not believe the problem warrants a season change for local hunters who primarily are after meat.

#### Summary

- >The Haines has many residents living at or below the poverty level
- >One Black Bear can supply a family multiple weeks of meat
- >Spring Black Bear is the first big game animal for hunting each year
- >Hunters using bait can take time to size and sex animals before shooting
- >The Area Biologist confirmed that bears taken over bait tend to be male
- >The State places subsistence use as a priority over non-residents
- >Shortening baiting season will drastically reduce subsistence opportunity
- >Much area around Haines is currently closed to baiting through restrictions
- >Bait sites are safe environment to introduce young and novice hunters to hunting

#### Discussion

Our community is diverse. Our household incomes are varied from well off to well below the poverty line. Much of our income is summer time employment. Our moose and goat hunts are in the fall. Many families utilize fish and other meat gathered in the summer and fall to make it through the winter, by spring many freezers are emptied down and bank accounts depleted.

The black bear is often the first big game animal available in the spring, and many households utilize that opportunity for food. If each bear produces 50 lbs of meat, that would have been five weeks of meat for my family as my son grew up. Consider the importance of that food source to families with low incomes. Please consider that using the figures from the biologist comments a bait site has a 66% chance of a bear kill; 66% chance of harvesting multiple weeks of meat for the family.

The biologist comments are neutral, which indicates any change a choice of opinion, not for wildlife health and protection. In the comments it is stated that 37% of the black bears were taken over bait, and that the majority of the kills come during the time of proposed closure. Also noted is that bears taken with bait tend to be more males than females.

Limiting bait sites to only two weeks would reduce the success of sites. Often hunters will begin baiting, checking the site for more than a week before they see any sign of bears, (please remember that by regulation bait can be put out only when it is legal to use a bait site). Once bear have found the site, many hunters selectively choose bears for size and sex. Limiting sites to be out only two weeks reduces the opportunity for bears to find the bait, and hunters to then sit on the site, especially those with daytime commitments that can only hunt on weekends. Please remember that bait sites must be 1 mile from homes most of our road system. Under the proposed change hunters will not only become less selective but would not have the opportunity to hunt due to other commitments.

Also, the two weeks proposed use in June can mean very warm temperatures and bears rubbing off their fur. Bear hides will be less desirable, and fewer will be salvaged. Additionally, by June 1 the summer tour season is in full swing with many fishermen out at sea, the local gillnet fleet preparing for the start of their season; this would eliminate many folks from having the opportunity to install, hunt and care for bait sites.

Under the current regulations the biologist has stated that 18 people had permits for bait stations, and that an average of 12 black bears are taken from those sites. Of note is the statement "sex rations of bears taken over bait are skewed towards males." For health of the bears, the taking of males is desired. When hunting over bait a competent hunter can hang bait in a manner that favors larger bears getting to the bait. While a bear is reaching up for the bait the hunter can observe the sex of the bear before choosing to shoot.

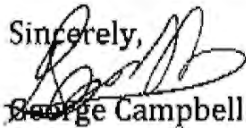
One of the arguments is that black bear bait stations effectively negate high bear traffic areas from brown bear hunting. Current bait site restrictions keep much of the easy access bear habitat closed from baiting. Please look at the amount of area currently closed to baiting around Haines. By removing the Chilkat Peninsula, 1 mile from all houses, and the 1 mile from the Haines Highway, Lutak, Porcupine and

Chilkat lake roads, ¼ mile from all logging and mining roads, hunters are limited in where they can place a bait site.

Lastly, a bait site is an easy and safe way to take novice and young hunters hunting. With modern tree stand seats a young hunter can be safe, have a steady shooting platform, and comfortable. In an era where we work hard to educate and introduce hunters into the sport, further restricting a hunt that families can participate in every year after school and on weekends in the spring seems counter intuitive.

Again, thank you for your time and efforts protecting our wildlife. Please consider the needs of the people in Haines eating wild game while you make this decision.

Sincerely,



George Campbell