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Alaska Board of Game
P.O.B. 115526
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Dear Board of Game members:

Thank you for dedicating a big part of your lives to Alaska's process of ensuring the well-being of Alaska's wildlife and their appropriate uses. I apologize for my late comments.

I have comments on a few of the proposals to be considered at your March 2016 meeting, but I mainly want to emphasize the Constitutional framework which defines the vision for Alaska's fish and wildlife management and provides the foundation for appropriate statutes and regulations to fulfill that vision.

A relevant part of the Alaska Constitution that I haven't heard mentioned in discussions of wildlife management is Article I, Section 23. Resident Preference. It reads: "This constitution does not prohibit the State from granting preferences, on the basis of Alaska residence, to residents of the State over nonresidents to the extent permitted by the Constitution of the United States."

Although this section was an amendment to address labor issues, it certainly bears on all state laws, including those relating to wildlife management. I think it bears on current debates over wildlife harvest allocation between residents and non-residents by legitimizing resident preferences.

I believe that due to a variety of factors affecting hunting opportunities and their allocations the time has come to establish firm preferences for residents, so I support Proposals 101 and 107 and recommend that the Board of Game apply a similar resident to non-resident allocation ratio to other hunts that involve similar issues.

The second Constitutional vision I want to emphasize is laid out in Article VIII, Sections 3, 15 and 17, often collectively referred to as the "equal access clauses". These are the foundation protecting "common use" of fish and wildlife, by all Alaskans – and, significantly, don't extent to non-residents.

Alaskans are beset on all sides by erosion of the equal access provisions. Even the Board of Game and the Department of Law have infringed on these provisions. Not to mention the unconstitutional federal rural subsistence priority which, along with other federal policies, squeezes Alaskans out in various ways on federal lands, and, as in Proposal 141, challenges state regulations on state land. It is important to remember that years ago the NPS, through its own duplicity, soured a land trade deal with the state that would have put the Wolf Townships into Denali National Park. Now they want to dictate wildlife rules there anyway.

Where the Board of Game has set up rules to accommodate subsistence uses under state law those people qualifying have a responsibility to show they acknowledge and respect that accommodation by following the rules and providing factual data. Therefore I support Proposals 103, 104, and 105.

Finally, with regard to various needed regulatory "fixes", I support Proposals, 1, 2, 5, 23 through 26, 78 and 87. I support proposals 113 through 131. I oppose Proposals 69 and 79.

The rationales for my positions have either been well addressed by the proponents or are obvious—as in opposing prohibiting dogs for hunting, a non-problem, and opposing 24 hour trap-checks, which anecdotal information confirms that it interferes with legal trapping and demands of enforcement people that they conduct this nuisance enforcement because it's in the regulations

Regarding Proposal 141, I appreciate the Denali Park's problem—while they are unlikely to lose the wolves for very long they may permanently "lose face" as the great protector of "an intact ecosystem". If you decide to give them a break by shortening the wolf season I suggest it be on condition that they post a sign on the Park road saying: "Wolves generously supplied by the State of Alaska."

Sincerely,


Richard H. Bishop