

RC110

Dear Board of Game;

I've been listening to the testimonies regarding Prop 90 and I'm left with some questions.

- 1) Many domestic sheep and goat owners are active hunters too. We understand flock health and flock dynamics and have a keen interest in wild herd longevity, since that is where we get part of our food supply. We are already "at the table" when issues come up with regard to disease that could harm wild flocks. So why would we need the threat of a regulatory requirement to bring us into the conversation? We are already part of the solution; we have been practicing bio-security for decades. We are not just willing to talk we are already "at the table" all we need is to be included in the communication.
- 2) Where exactly are the habitats that need to be protected? There are sheep on the mountains around my home that I can see with high powered scopes. Yet for those wild sheep to get to my domestic sheep they would need to cross a highway, cross a river, negotiate through subdivisions and farmlands, much of which is fenced and cross-fenced. And then once they get to my place they have to endure the alarm barking of my livestock guardian dogs that are trained to prevent any other animals or people from getting to my sheep.
- 3) How are the WSF folks going to manage the wild sheep to keep them from spreading disease to the domestic flocks? Alaskan farmers like me spend thousands of dollars annually to breed, raise, feed, and house our sheep so that we can feed the local populations. The local meat industry is a thriving part of the local economy that could be threatened by wild sheep or goats bringing disease. We have several measures in place, boot sanitizing stations, foot baths, and quarantine facilities for animals new to our farm, as well as strict policies to only bring in new animals from tested farms, all to ensure the health of our flock. Illness will not only make the meat unusable, it makes the wool break – which renders that wool useless to fiber artists.

I am an Alaskan, I was born here, my parents and grandparents have hunted all over this state since well before Alaska became a state. I understand and truly appreciate our unique way of life in Alaska that melds farming, hunting, and fishing. You can check any freezer and find wild game, local fish and locally grown meat and veggies. It's what we eat, it's our food chain. It's important to keep that chain strong and intact. Removing a link from the chain by removing domestic sheep and goats from the clean list would weaken our food chain considerably.

Please consider that most farmers already perform regular health screens, and we already go to great lengths to keep foreign animals out of, and away from, our pastures. We are already addressing everything Prop 90 claims we need to start doing. There is absolutely nothing to be gained by approving this proposal and so very much to be lost. Please do not doom Alaska's sheep industry, our local food chain, and our local farm economy by approving any part of this proposal.

Sincerely,
Michelle Olsen
Tower Ranch Alaska, LLC