

November 7, 2017

Dear Board of Game Administrators:

RC 030

I am opposed to Proposal 64, and ask you to TAKE NO ACTION on it. My viewpoints are those of a goat owner from Palmer, Alaska. I am representative of many in the greater Palmer area which is why I am writing you this letter. I own two goats and do not foresee ever having more than three goats on our 2.5 acre parcel. Stormy and Ranger have been tested and are clean. I will, in the near future breed Stormy to a buck from a clean, tested, M.ovi-free herd, and plan to maintain a closed herd ourselves.

Our goats are livestock-- Stormy provides us with milk which we drink and use to make cheese, soap, and yogurt. We have opted to have a milk goat because this complements our more self-sufficient lifestyle. Stormy and Ranger (her companion) are contained in a fenced-in area and our overall property is fenced. Goats, unlike dogs, do not wander. Therefore there is no co-mingling with other livestock. The Talkeetna Range is visible in the far distance. I have seen sheep via a spotting scope; however there is no way that we or our goats would ever venture into their rugged highland vicinity, and no way that these animals would ever venture into our flat lowland vicinity. The distance is too vast, and the obstacles too daunting and numerous.

My extensive research shows that the requirements of Proposal 64 involve obtaining permits, building "department-approved" fencing, and completing costly testing. These requirements are ill-conceived, hugely exaggerated, and according to ADF&G, unenforceable. Furthermore, removal of domestic sheep and goats from the Clean List would fail to provide a single benefit or safeguard to the health of the wild sheep population.

Proposition 64 is an example of government overreach at its worst. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has advised the Board of Game not to take action. They have done their research, and have concluded that Prop 64 is most fitting in relation to the Lower 48 model of large commercial domestic herds which reside in open range grazing areas that adjoin or overlap bighorn sheep habitat. In contrast, Alaskan sheep and goat owners maintain flocks and herds on small, private fenced acreages, with no access to distant Dall sheep habitat. The Board of Game's request is not conservation but rather is hunting-based.

My research also indicates that Alaskan sheep and goat owners have participated in testing with results indicating that the disease in question, M. ovi, is not a threat within the state's livestock population due to both low prevalence and extremely low likelihood of contact. Of the 334 animals tested to date, only six animals, (four sheep and two goats, less than two percent of the total,) have tested positive. This science-based finding counters the suggestion that stringent rules need to be put in place in regards to livestock testing and containment. In other words, the threat is miniscule and not deserving of the proposed actions on the part of the Board of Game.

In summation, Proposition 64 would be more deleterious than beneficial to Alaska taxpayers, whether hunters or farmers. If you would like further testimony, I can be reached via email, alysculhane@hotmail.com.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

Alys Culhane