

Doug Vincent-Lang
Commissioner

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Department of
Fish and Game

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Disappointed by Court's Restraining Order, ADF&G Warns of Threat to Mulchatna Caribou Recovery and Subsistence Hunting

May 13, 2025 (Anchorage, AK) — On Tuesday, Alaska Superior Court Judge Christina Rankin issued a temporary restraining order prohibiting the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) from engaging in brown bear predator control measures to restore the Mulchatna Caribou Herd in Game Management Units 17 and 18. This herd is severely depressed and is not able to support hunting that is culturally important and a necessary food source. The ADF&G Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang has released the following statement on the ruling:

"We are extremely disappointed with the court's ruling. This will severely reduce our ability to rebuild this herd to provide sustained subsistence hunting opportunities as required under state law. Alaska has a subsistence priority, and ADF&G is committed to local rural users to rebuild this population. Our efforts were requested by and are supported by local users, communities, State Boards of Fish and Game Advisory Committees, and the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Our efforts have been successful in turning the herd around, and we have observed increased calf survival and an increase in herd numbers. We were in the third year of our efforts, and this order halted our work and jeopardized our recovery efforts.

While we continue to pursue any legal options available to us, we will schedule a Board of Game meeting in accordance with the court order to get the program re-authorized. By the court order, ADF&G is immediately ceasing its brown bear predator control efforts. I apologize to local users and communities as this will jeopardize the herd's recovery.

This program is clearly authorized under Alaska's intensive management statute and is being conducted in accordance with ADF&G intensive management protocols. I remain convinced we will prevail in restoring this program and rebuilding the herd. It is our responsibility to do so."

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