

**Alaska Board of Game
Statewide Regulations Meeting
November 10-17, 2017 Anchorage, AK
The Lakefront Anchorage, Redington Ballroom
Bruce L. Ervin – Testimony**

RC 036

Thank you, Mr. Chair and Members of the Board. My name is Bruce L. Ervin and I'm a student in the Tribal Management program within the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I would like to start off talking about Proposal 4.

Proposal 4 - Change the definition of edible meat for large game birds

I support Proposal 4. As an Alaska Native Upper Tanana Athabascan, I would like to inform the public of the connection that Alaska Native people have with traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering. It is a strong held belief among Alaska Native peoples that one should not waste any parts of the animal. "Animals cooperate with humans, offering themselves rather than being subdued; they are eternal, perpetually reborn, and clothed in new flesh after death at the hand of the hunter" (Crowell, 2010, p. 13). Alaska Natives believe that all parts of the animal should be used in a respectful way as to not insult the animals spirit. Proposal 4 is honoring the Alaska Native way and respecting the spirit of the large game birds, therefore I support this proposal and ask you to support Proposal 4.

Proposal 14 - Prohibit the taking of bears in dens, Proposal 15 – Remove the exception for taking cub bears and female bears with cubs

I oppose Proposal 14 and 15. "In Athabascan belief, everything around us has life. The land and trees have spirits, and we treat them with respect. Animals and fish are given the same kind of care" (Crowell, 2010, p. 176). Proposal 14 and 15 would eliminate a traditional Native practice. If you take away this traditional practice you will be denying a people of their right to practice traditional subsistence, and this will affect future generations in a negative way, because they will lose a part of their identity. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board I ask you to honor the traditional beliefs of Alaska Natives and oppose Proposal 14.

Proposal 43 – Allow the taking of Emperor geese by proxy hunting

I support Proposal 43. In Alaska Native culture our Elders are cherished and some of them are not able to hunt for game due to various reasons. Proposal 43 would allow the proxy hunting of Emperor geese so that a hunter could not only provide for their family, but others like Elders. I believe that this proposal will benefit those who are not able to hunt, and I urge you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board to support Proposal 43.

Proposal 55 – Combine the regulations allowing the take of big game for religious ceremonies and ceremony potlatches REQUIRE PERMIT.

I oppose Proposal 55. This proposal affects Alaska Native people and to my knowledge they were not even involved in the process of this proposal. You cannot consolidate culture and religion in one. Each cultural and religious practice is unique. Furthermore, “The traditional ceremonies of Alaska Native cultures were highly diverse, varying within and among regions and over time” (Crowell, 2010, p. 25). Alaska Native people need to be involved with making changes to our culture and religious practices. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board I urge you to oppose Proposal 55.

Proposal 57 – Change the definition of “community” or “group” for community subsistence harvest hunts

I support my fellow students in supporting Proposal 57. Thank you for putting this proposal forward as it meets your original intent of the community hunt.

Proposal 58 – Modify the salvage requirements for moose and caribou taken under community subsistence harvest hunts

I support Proposal 58. “Today, as in the past, Alaska Natives harvest wild foods to sustain themselves and their communities” (Crowell, 2010, p. 20). Alaska Natives honor animals by not wasting parts of the animal, so I support this proposal. There are many beneficial ways that one could use the bones, so I ask you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Board to support Proposal 58.

Proposal 66 – Update the Board of Game’s policy for accepting agenda change requests to make it more consistent with the Joint Board Petition Policy.

I support my fellow students and their decision on Proposal 66.

In closing I would like to thank Mr. Chair and Members of the Board for listening to my testimony.

References

Crowell, A. (2010). *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.