

Strongly oppose RC009

On 14 March 2025, the Alaska Superior Court ruled that (1) ADF&G failed to follow due process during BOG hearings and, further, that (2) ADF&G failed to comply with Alaska's constitutional mandate requiring the BOG to address the sustainability of brown bears. In the case of the former, BOG failed to provide the litigant "with adequate notice or a meaningful opportunity to be heard about a regulatory proposal." In the latter case, it was clear that ADF&G "lacked sufficient bear population and distribution information [needed by the BOG] to consider all the factors that are important and relevant to assure sustainability of the bear population."

What is so egregious about RC009 is that it clearly is dismissive of this ruling, being proposed one week after the ruling as an "emergency", yet again with inadequate time for public comments and issued at the start of the BOG meeting. And clearly no new data on brown bear populations or their distributions have been collected since the ruling.

This IM effort should never have been authorized. ADF&G biologists concluded in 2020 that the main reasons for the decline of the MCH were lack of food (lichens) and brucellosis, not high predation. In fact, as is well known in the scientific literature on density-dependent population regulation, predation is a means to remove starving and diseased animals. Also consider that the MCH successfully increased from 14,000 in 1974 to 200,000 two decades later without predator control; there is no intrinsic reason to believe it won't do that again.

Implementing costly aerial predator control simply compounds the problem by turning what should be "sustained yield" into "subsidized yield", a caricature of what was meant in the Alaska constitution under Article 8. Aerial gunning operations for the MCH in 2023 and 2024 cost over \$815,000 of general revenue funds.

This doesn't even begin to address the ethics issues that many hunters aim to achieve while hunting. Aerial gunning cannot ensure a clean kill, the minimization of suffering is the goal in placing shots, which cannot be achieved in the way this farce of a predator control program is being executed in.

With the way this program is being ramrodded through even after it was deemed unlawful it really begs the question who is benefitting from it? It's not the people of Alaska, it's not the herds, and it's certainly not the bears.