

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

BOARD of GAME

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

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June 22, 2007

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

JUN 29 2007

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
ANCHORAGE

The Honorable Sarah Palin
State of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Palin,

First, congratulations on a successful session and thank you for your continued support of the Board of Game and Department of Fish and Game.

Mr. Robert Fiftian, representing the Alaska Professional Hunters Association, presented a resolution to the Board during our March meeting requesting our support concerning the development and implementation of a competitive guide lease area program through the Department of Natural Resources. The Board unanimously supported the concept of the resolution.

The concept of a competitive guide lease program is not a new system to our state. A very similar program is being utilized by the Department of Interior to manage guiding activity on federal lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and National Park Services. Alaskan guides and the Alaska Professional Hunters Association have been integrally involved with the design and implementation of the federal program. Such a program would have a fee component which would provide a positive financial benefit to the state. It would reduce user conflicts to improve social relations in rural areas, improve the quality of guided hunts by reducing competition between guides, and require guides who operate on state lands to be good stewards of local wildlife and the environment.

The Board recently had to deal with a clear example of the necessity for a competitive lease program. As few as six to eight years ago, only six guides offered sheep hunts in a portion of Game Management Unit 13D, south of the Glenn Highway between Palmer and Glennallen. We learned at our March meeting that 38 guides are currently operating in that area. The majority of these guides attended the Board meeting and testified in support of a Department proposal to reduce hunting opportunity by changing the current regulations from an unlimited general hunt to a limited-entry drawing permit hunt for resident and non-resident hunters. Support for drawing permit hunts are rarely supported by the guiding industry because they can not guarantee a client will draw a permit. This area was so heavily over-hunted there were no other options. This Board action may solve the over-hunting in this area but these guides will simply shift to another fully utilized area to take their clients.

cc: Dick Lefebvre

Until the Department of Natural Resources establishes a competitive guide lease program and regulations are created to control the activities of big game transporters, it will be difficult to avoid restricting hunting opportunities using limited-entry drawing permit hunts as we did in 13D.

Governor, again we appreciate all your support and thank you for your time in this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Cliff Judkins, Chairman
Alaska Board of Game

cc: Commissioner Tom Irwin, Department of Natural Resources
Commissioner Denby Lloyd, Department of Fish and Game