



Alaska Department of Fish and Game under siege

The Democrat-controlled House Majority Caucus has set its sights on reworking how the Alaska Department of Fish & Game does business, with a multi-pronged assault on how it manages our resources.



The main story

The anti-hunting and fishing agenda being proposed calls for:

- Relaxing ethics rules for the Board of Fish and the Board of Game
- Adding two designated seats to the Board of Game from the tourism industry
- Restricting legal trapping activities
- Bypassing the Board of Game to create a buffer zone around Denali Park for wolves
- Increasing penalties and violations
- And much more



Many of the bill aiming at restructuring the Department of Fish and Game have come before me as part of the House Resources Committee. With just four Republican Caucus members we do all we can to object to the changes.

Board of Fish and Board of Game Appointments

On top of this legislation, the legislature is rapidly approaching the annual confirmation vote for the Governor's appointment to the Board of Fish and Board of Game. The House Resources committee will be considering the appointments starting Wednesday and we'd like to hear your thoughts on the appointees.

I encourage you to find your way to the nearest Legislative Information office to offer testimony of these appointees. If you can't make it to an LIO call **1-844-586-9085** to offer your testimony.

House Resources Committee

Wednesday, March 29

Board of Fish Appointees

The committee will take up the appointments of Reed Morisky and John Jensen during the 1 p.m. hearing.

Friday, March 31

Board of Game Appointments

The committee will take up the appointments of Karen Linnell, Thomas Lamal, Stanley Hoffman, and Ted Spraker during the 1 p.m. hearing

Big Game Services Board Appointments

The committee will take up the appointments of Henry Tiffany, James Atkins and Thomas Sullivan during the 1 p.m. hearing.

Legislation to watch

The efforts are being led by Rep. Andy Josephson (D-Anchorage) who has introduced much of the legislation.



House Bill 105

Will close an area of 532 square miles along the boundary of Denali National Park to wolf hunting and trapping. This bill is despite the Board of Game rejecting the buffer zone which was sought by the National Parks administration for its benefit, not Alaskans, contrary to the constitutional mandate to manage wildlife on a Sustained Yield Principle.

House Bill 17

Creates the Fish and Wildlife Fund, by taking the money generated by the department from the sale of hunting/fishing licenses, tags, special permits and species tags (currently used to fund the department's operating budget) to fund a fish and wildlife conservation fund. If passed all funds from the sale of licenses and tags will go to the conservation fund only.

House Bill 39

Would eliminate the Department's "Intensive Management Programs" which help control the over population of predatory wolves and bears, providing for the constitutionally mandated Sustainable Yield of prey species.

House Bill 40

Calls for a 200-foot buffer on trails where trapping would be prohibited, requiring the tagging of all traps in use, and would make trapping inside these areas a criminal offense. Potentially bringing an end to historic and traditional trapping lines.



House Bill 134

Calls for the Restructuring of the Board of Game. Dedicating two of the seven seats on the board to someone from the tourism industry and a non-consumptive user. The bill calls for special recognition of these two groups, but does not include the subsistence hunters, trappers, sport hunters, or other users of Alaska wildlife.

Boards of Fish and Game

House Bill 87

Rewrites the Executive Ethics Act as it applies to the Board of Fish and Board of Game. Reducing the standards as to what equals a conflict and allows members with a conflict to participate in the deliberations of an issue, before excusing themselves from the vote. It reduces the ethics standards for members of the board. Anytime you reduce ethics standards you open the door for abuse. Kodiak Representative Louise Stutes introduced this legislation.

House Bill 88

Increases the membership of the Board of Fish from seven members to nine. While this seems a minor change, it comes with the additional cost of two additional members. Plus creates the greater possibility for an imbalance on the board that has been carefully maintained over the years. This is another bill from Rep. Stutes.



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