

PROPOSAL 159 - 5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements. Require hunters on the Kenai Peninsula to take an ADF&G approved hunter orientation course for identifying legal moose.

PROPOSED BY: Kenai/Soldotna Fish and Game Advisory Committee

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? This proposal would require all moose hunters to complete an online orientation course on the identification of legal moose prior to hunting on the Kenai Peninsula (Units 7 and 15).

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS? There is currently no orientation course required for moose hunters in Units 7 and 15. Hunters born after January 1, 1986 and 16 years of age or older must complete a Basic Hunter Education course before hunting in these units.

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WAS ADOPTED? This proposal applies to all moose hunts on the Kenai Peninsula and makes moose hunter orientation a mandatory requirement for participation in the hunts. An orientation course and administrative process will need to be developed prior to implementation, and the requirement would apply to all hunts types: drawing, registration, general season, targeted, and Tier II.

BACKGROUND: The percentage of illegal moose taken that do not meet antler requirements is unknown across the state. The Kenai Peninsula is one of very few areas where sealing is required for harvested moose. Of the 263 moose killed in Units 7 and 15 in 2016, 57 animals were illegal based on their antler configuration. The highest percentage of illegal take was in Unit 15C (23%), which was also highest harvest area (193 out of 263 moose taken). Even though illegally taken moose do not survive to achieve a legal antler size and become legal for hunting, the bull:cow ratio in Unit 15C is above the management objectives.

In Units 17 and 19B, an orientation program, which includes viewing the “Is This Moose Legal?” and “Field Care of Big Game” videos, is required for nonresident moose hunters who are not hunting with an Alaska-licensed guide or resident family-member within second-degree of kindred. There are no other orientation requirements, and resident hunters are not required to view the video or complete any other certification. Sealing is not required for moose in either of these units, and it is unknown if completing the orientation has any effect on the percentage of illegal moose harvested.

The department is in the process of remaking the “Is This Moose Legal?” video and the new version should be available for viewing in 2017.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department is **NEUTRAL** on this proposal to require a moose orientation course for hunters on the Kenai Peninsula.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal may result in additional costs to the department in developing a new orientation course and certification process.