

2-15-18

RC 009

Pay to: Game Board

From: Henry Hill

~~Street~~

3 pgs inc this cover -

Letter in support of

MOOSE opening for 19A

Story-Holita area

att: Jn or Nissa -

Thanks!

Dear Board Members,

My name is Henry Hill. I am from Sleetmute and have lived here for thirty- one years. I run a lodge, store, and fuel business. I am testifying on proposal 165 to open the closed portion of unit 19A to a small registration hunt.

A little history is needed in how we got to this place of trying to get to hunt after seventeen years of closure. In 1998 the moose population in the Stony River Holitna area were probably at carrying capacity. We had a September, November, and a February hunt. The February hunt was antlerless. That fall the expanding Mulchatna caribou herd changed migration patterns and came through Sleetmute heading into McGrath and Iditarod country. With the caribou came the resident wolf packs. With this increase in prey the wolf packs increased in numbers along with the size of the packs. By the year 2002 the moose population was decimated.

The political structure at the time would not allow predator control on wolves. Wolf numbers did start to decrease because food was becoming scarce. Moose hunting was slow to be curtailed again because of the politics at the time.

Eventually the Fish and Game realized that this area was in crisis and closed hunting and eventually allowed Tier II hunting in 19A. We in Stony River- Holitna area opted to stay closed.

Finally wolf control was installed. This helped, but the main predator of moose are bears and their numbers were high. They were not allowing for any calf production. This just stalled any population growth. Fish and Game after much time was able to institute a bear removal program on the lower Stony and lower Holitna rivers. A large number of bears were removed and the moose calf population has now begun to increase.

Our cow-bull ratio has been high enough in the past couple of years that we could have had a small registration hunt. The problem was because of intensive management on all of 19A. Fish and Game need moose numbers from the Aniak drainage and had been unable to fly those surveys because of snow and weather conditions. Fish and Game finally succeeded this spring but it was too late. Our cycle on the board had just passed. That meant our earliest hunt would be in 2020.

I and the chairman of the local Advisory Committee have a terrible relationship and I try not to be in his space. They had not planned to put in an agenda change request and it was only after I did that they called a meeting.

I have been told that Bethel AC, Aniak AC, and McGrath AC have all come out in support of Stony River- Holitna AC. My question is why are they trying to prevent a hunt when they have been hunting moose for some time in their local areas?

I ask this board to lay aside the politics and base my request strictly on the biologists report that states there is a small harvestable moose population. I feel opening a small hunt this fall would demonstrate a small success to all the effort and money put into this recovery. This is not to

mention the loss of hunting opportunity for eleven years. I do not believe this has ever happened in the history of the State of Alaska.

Some on this board will question why I we opted out of Tier II. The answer is simple. This area has a small amount of human population, but this area is traditional all the way to the Bering Sea. That pressure would have resulted in slow moose population growth and Tier II would have remained forever.

My business has provided support services to Fish and Game for years. I am very well aware of the biological resources of this area.

I am 69 years old. I would like to think that I might get to shoot another moose on the Holitna.

Thank you, members of the Board,

Henry M Hill