

RC 077



# North Star Animal Hospital

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## Fax

To: Alaska Board of Attn: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: 907-465-6094 Date: 11-14-17 Pages: 3

Re: \_\_\_\_\_ From: Teresa Beck DVM

\* Comment after Town hall  
meeting Re: Prop 64  
Nov. 12

\* Please Review before decision

Respectfully

Teresa Beck DVM

**Teresa Beck, DVM Shauna Henry, DVM**

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**From:** "Teresa Beck, DVM Shauna Henry, DVM" <starpets@mtaonline.net>  
**To:** <dfg.commissioner@alaska.gov>; <ombudsman@akleg.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 14, 2017 9:36 AM  
**Subject:** State of Alaska BOG: PROP 64: Response to townhall meeting

Dear Alaska State Board of Game and Commissioner,

I am a licensed and practicing Veterinarian in Palmer, Alaska. I attended the townhall meeting that the public was invited to attend re: Prop 64 at the Lakefront Hotel in Anchorage on November 12. My observations at this meeting created a deep concern for me. This deceptive proposition is being promoted in the name of Wild Sheep Conservation, however it places the future of Alaskan agriculture in peril. I am writing to you today because this Proposition should be removed IMMEDIATELY from consideration at this time.

**Brief Synopsis:** Concern that a bacterial infection, *Mycoplasma Ovipneumoniae*, that can be carried by domestic sheep may spread to indigenous wild Alaska sheep and cause a massive mortality event. It consists of removing Domestic Sheep and Goats from the "Clean List" requiring anyone possessing sheep and goats to have permits and fences. Also discussed was mandatory testing for the organism and removing and replacing affected animals from Alaska herds.

The proposal is bad for Alaska and Alaskans and is not ready to be pushed into regulation:

1. The research is incomplete. In Alaska, we only have approx. 2000 domestic sheep and goats. A small portion have been tested at a rate of 4% carrying the organism. No wild sheep have been tested. It is entirely possible that wild sheep carry this organism already. It is not proven that bronchopneumonia outbreaks in other states were due to one sole organism. Usually, fatal bronchopneumonia is a multifactorial situation due to several organisms, nutritional deficiencies and/or other contributing factors. There have been NO documented cases of *M.ovi* causing bronchopneumonia ever in wild Alaskan sheep. There is simply NOT enough scientific evidence that this is needed.
2. The Board of Game should not be making decisions about domestic livestock, handling and disease testing. This not their jurisdiction. The State Veterinarian and also the Department of Agriculture should have some role in these discussions before regulations even begin to go out for public comment.
3. Domestic Sheep and Goats are an integral part of Alaska food security. There may not be a lot of them, but their presence in Alaska is important to our local agricultural industry. Regulation and permitting sheep and goats already residing in our state will be subjected to "mandatory" testing until the state is considered "m. ovi free" which is an undefined period of time. Removal of these valuable species from the "Clean list" is a devastating step backwards toward the future of Alaskan Agriculture.
4. An Outside Interest Group, Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), is pushing this through claiming they will pay for all the laboratory testing and replacement of infected animals in Alaskan Herds. Alaska can't pass laws based on promises of an outside interest group footing the bill. This will still have to be budgeted by Alaska's general fund and the tax payers. The scientific evidence they are claiming to legitimize this proposal is being presented by a wildlife biologist representing WSF and not independent researchers.
5. Alaska is under-served by veterinarians. The State Veterinary office doesn't have the resources to test all the domestic sheep and goats in Alaska. There are not even enough private practitioners in our state to sample all these animals even if there was 100% consent and even if we could identify where all the domestic sheep and goats

- are in our large state.
6. Mandatory testing and registering domestic herds is over reach of government. Alaskans value their independence and their ability to live sustainably how they choose.
  7. Outside Wild Sheep populations in other states that did have a bronchopneumonia outbreak, did eventually recover and with higher population numbers given time and the ability to recover.

I sincerely hope that you will intercede with the Board of Game meeting that is currently underway and stop the considerations of this proposal until if/when the need for this type of regulation is needed. Alaska does not need this at this time.

Respectfully,

Teresa Beck DVM  
Palmer Alaska