

RC0033

John Rydeen

1945 N Belmont Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645
(907)299-1686
westby13@gmail.com

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Chairman Spraker and Board members,

Proposal 99: Oppose

Thank you chairman Spraker and other board members for this chance to give my opposing testimony to Proposal 99. Allocating 90% of Kodiak brown bear tags to resident hunters is a major change from the current allocation and management plan. Between my nearly 19 years experience hunting brown bears on Kodiak Island and talking with those who have been there since the 1960's, Kodiak Island's brown bear is a management success story. The current allocation of 40/60% (non-resident to resident) has found a balance that is beneficial for the bear to succeed as well as the local economy, guiding industry, and resident hunters. Accepting this proposal will negatively affect all four parties involved.

According to the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's comments on this proposal, an increase in resident Kodiak bear tags would likely increase the harvesting of sows. An increase in sow harvest would likely lead to a decrease in brown bear tags across the board. Therefore, going to a 90% resident allocation of bear tags would not end up bringing as many additional tags to residents as hoped for.

This proposal will also negatively affect the guiding industry. I have been a part of the Kodiak bear hunting guiding industry going on 19 years. I rely on these hunts as part of my livelihood. If this proposal were adopted, the number of tags lost would be detrimental to the guiding industry and in turn negatively affect the income I rely on to support my family.

Not only will this proposal hurt me personally, it will largely negatively affect the local and state economy. Although I do not live on or in Kodiak, when I come there for the bear season myself and my hunters spend money around town before and after the hunt. With less non-resident hunters means less outfitters and guides coming to town to spend money.

There is an argument that it is in the Alaska Constitution these animals be reserved to the people for common use and utilized for maximum benefit of its people. I would say that it is already doing that. The brown bear is not a subsistence animal. Neither residents or non-residents hunt brown bears for food or to subside on. I would argue that the maximum benefit to Kodiak brown bear hunting is its economic value. The money non-resident Kodiak brown bear hunting brings to the local and state economy far exceeds that of the resident hunters. Having 40% non-resident hunters is a by far greater benefit to the Alaskan people than having only a 10% allocation. I believe the current plan meets the Alaska Constitutional mandate referenced in this proposal

I am a resident of Alaska. I also like to hunt for myself and put in for draw hunts like many other residents. Some draw hunts are harder to draw than others. That just goes to show how special they are. I have spent more time and have gained more experience guiding and hunting Kodiak brown bears than any other animal in Alaska. Over the past 18 seasons I have been a part of the Kodiak brown bear success story. My personal experience in the field has led me to believe that over that period of time, bear hunting on Kodiak has not only remained good in reference to the quantity of bears and bear sightings, but the number of large boars and book bears being harvested has seemed to increase. I really believe the management that is in place right now is working really well. Changing that plan this drastic would have negative affects for everyone involved

In closing, I would like the board to take into account not just my views but all of the comments from the Kodiak Advisory Council on this proposal. All members are unanimous on their views regarding this proposal to oppose proposal 99.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify,

John Rydeen