

Findings Concerning the Petition from the Village of Tyonek for an  
Emergency Opening of the Moose Season in Game Management Unit 16B

In the spring of 1983 the Board of Game adopted regulations providing for a November 1-15 season for hunting moose in Unit 16B. Two hundred registration permits were made available to the residents of that unit, including the village of Tyonek (population approximately 300), and the surrounding area bordering the northwest shore of the Upper Cook Inlet. Residents of this area had requested a late season opening, in addition to the September season, in that winter snows drive moose from upland regions to areas closer and more accessible to unit residents. Winter conditions, such as frozen water bodies and snowcover, enable hunters to reach hunting areas and to transport harvested moose to their homes. In addition, the traditional method of preserving moose meat by freezing out of doors or in smokehouses is only possible when constantly cold temperatures prevail.

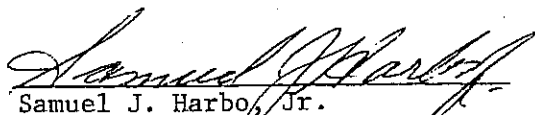
During the November 1-15, 1983 opening, the first under the new regulation, weather conditions were characterized by warm temperatures and an absence of snowfall. Consequently moose populations failed to move to lower regions, and conditions conducive to winter travel were absent. Despite high levels of hunting effort, similar to those of other open seasons, it is estimated that the 80 permitted hunters from the southern portion of 16B harvested only one moose.

The successful harvesting of moose in Tyonek and the area south of the Beluga River in Unit 16B is critical to the health and welfare of the residents of the area. Wild fish and game harvests traditionally provide

the vast majority of the protein consumed by the community. In addition, the extremely poor commercial fishing season experienced by the fishermen of this area in 1983 has severely limited the area's major source of cash income. Unemployment in the village of Tyonek currently is 72%. A local logging operation, which provided a few jobs, is now closed. Thus, the failure to harvest moose in November has resulted in a lack of available food source that cannot be remedied through cash purchases.

The moose population in the southern portion of Unit 16B is currently in a very healthy state and the current harvests are far below what the herd can sustain. An additional harvest of moose by holders of the registration permits will not endanger the herds.

The Board, therefore, finds that an emergency situation exists in the southern portion of Unit 16B, south of the Beluga River. By opening a January 1-15 hunt to the unsuccessful registration permittees who reside in this area, the Board will provide an opportunity for the harvest of moose in winter conditions which will facilitate a successful harvest to meet local needs.

  
Samuel J. Harbo, Jr.  
Acting Chairman, Board of Game

12-7-83  
Date