

Attention: Board of Game

RC 081

Public Testimony, Proposal 79

Testimony of Michelle Anderson, Juneau, Alaska

3/21/2016

A personal commitment in Juneau regrettably prevents me from testifying before you in person. I did make an effort via Kristy Tibbles asking if teleconference testimony was permitted, and was told that was not an option. Thank you for your service to the board and for taking the time to evaluate trapping proposals 79 and 80, created by myself along with Pat O'Brien, fellow Juneau resident.

I have reviewed the Alaska State Troopers, ADFG, A/C and public comments in regards to these proposals as have listened to most of the testimony regarding these proposals. Some valid points & concerns were raised, along with a lot of support from fellow Alaskans across the state.

Having heard the testimony thus far, there has not been much discussion about an alternate trap check time limit to the 24 hour hours that myself and Pat proposed. I would hope there would be at least a discussion about a reasonable time limit alternative and helpful to ask those testifying about these proposals what their thoughts might be on an alternate time check.

Mirroring my written comments submitted to the board previously, I wanted to remind you of my revised stance of proposal 79, involving trap check time limit. I support the proposal created, with a suggested amendment of a REASONABLE time limit being established for checking traps across the state. I realize this is a vast state with many factors involved, and 24 hours may not be feasible. My personal stance of 24

hours has not changed, and as a veterinary professional for over 20 years, I cannot advocate for prolonged and needless suffering of any animal. That being said, I understand the complexity involved in trapping across the many different regions in Alaska, and am supportive of any reasonable change in the right direction.

While researching information for our proposals, we evaluated time check limits of 24, 48 and 72 hours. These three time limits are all within the most common trapping regulations found across the majority of US states.

As you are likely already aware, Section 5 AAC 92.095 (a) of the Alaska Administrative Code addresses Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions. Paragraph (a) number (16) contains a requirement for a 72 hour time limit for checking traps. However, the requirement applies only to Unit 1(C), that portion west of Excursion Inlet and north of Icy Passage.

One suggestion offered would be to mimic this trap check time period across the state, rather than just being applied to a very small portion of Alaska. Likely there are already parameters in place for law enforcement of this time limit that could be implemented state-wide.

A Code of Ethics entitled "A Trapper's Responsibility" is located on the backside of the Alaska Trapping Regulations Booklet. Number two reads, "Check traps regularly." This recommendation is not enough.

Highlighted in my previous written comments, some trappers stated traps checked weekly or longer is a regular practice, while others have said those that check their traps that infrequently are not conducting themselves as ethical sportsmen. It is obvious that there are a variety of interpretations of "check traps regularly." This recommendation needs to become an enforceable regulation, with a finite amount of time designated.

I encourage the board to seriously consider establishing a reasonable trap check time limit statewide. The indiscriminate nature of traps and snares harbors many risks. A reasonable trap check time limit would reduce suffering of target wildlife and increase the chance of survival of non-target animals captured accidentally in traps and snares. Not to mention better preservation of the pelt, reducing chances of predation and damage to the fur.

I stand with many Alaskans when I ask for reasonable trapping regulations in our state. Designating a trap check time limit as well as moving traps and snares away from population centers will ensure a safer outdoor experience for Alaskans. It will also help to repair the negative relationship between trappers and non-consumptive outdoor enthusiasts in our state. Thank you for your time.