

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Increased Revenue from HB 137—Senate Resources Version “U”
March 28, 2016**

HB 137 proposes to raise fishing and hunting license fees. The increased revenue from CSHB137(FIN) am that passed the House is approximately \$8.6 million for FY 2018 with \$3.8 million estimated from fishing licenses and \$4.8 million from hunting licenses. An increase in Fish and Game Fund (F&GF) revenue will provide several benefits including providing predictable and reliable funding sources for core management activities, providing match for the currently abundant federal funds, and helping offset current and future reductions in general funds (GF).

Division of Wildlife Conservation

Intensive Management (IM)

IM programs that manage predators or enhance habitat are a core element of game management. Funding for IM programs over the last decade has consisted of capital appropriations. With declining GF, these capital appropriations will be more difficult to obtain and funding will be uncertain. Careful planning and reliable funding are essential to ensure these programs are effective and defensible.

An IM charge of \$10 for residents (103,400 licenses in 2015) and \$30 for non-residents (16,700 licenses in 2015) would generate \$1,535,000.

Filling Game Management Survey and Inventory (S&I) and Research Gaps

Increased license and tag fee revenue will be used to fill several gaps in basic management related information needs such as population estimates for moose, deer, wolves, bears, and caribou.

Many areas of the state have never been surveyed or employ sub-standard trend counts and indices of population performance. This inevitably results in overly-conservative harvest opportunity at the same time that demands for food and all uses increases.

In addition, basic research on the enhancement of certain species and populations is notably lacking. For example, musk-oxen are in high demand for a wide variety of uses from food to viewing, yet we know very little about restoring musk ox populations or how to subsequently manage them for enhanced harvest.

Two of the 5 wildlife regions have never had any significant research programs and subsequently have had to rely on information gathered elsewhere in the state. Increased F&GF with corresponding federal match will go a long way towards meeting these information needs.

Erosion of State’s Right to Manage

The relentless erosion of Alaska’s right to manage our game populations has reached new levels with federal rules and challenges making the area that the state can manage wildlife for the benefit of the people smaller and smaller.

Increased F&GF revenue will help provide support for the Department of Law, ANILCA and Access Defense Program and other efforts to stem the tide of federal over-reach. Because of the enormous amount of federal land in Alaska, there is no question that these efforts directly benefit the users who buy hunting/trapping licenses.

Advisory Committee (AC) and Board-based Regulatory Process

Alaska enjoys an open, public driven regulatory process to regulate the state’s fish and wildlife resources. The foundation of this process consists of more than 80 citizen Local Advisory Committees many of which are located in rural Alaska. As fishery and wildlife management becomes increasingly complex, advisory committee functions need to increase rather than wane with the availability of GF. Increases in F&GF revenues will help ensure that ACs can meet frequently to effectively participate in the board regulatory process.

Future GF Reductions

General funds for the division have been reduced from \$7.5 million in FY 2015 to \$4.4 million in the Governor’s FY 2017 amended budget, with future reductions likely. Increased F&GF revenue will help offset reductions in core services resulting from these GF reductions.

Take Advantage of Abundant Federal Funds

Unprecedented amounts of Pittman Robertson (PR) Funds are currently available due to increases in firearm and ammunition sales nationally, but they require a 3:1 match. Increases in license revenue can be used as match to take advantage of these funds for core services as well as one-time projects that benefit hunters and trappers, such as hunter access projects.

Division of Sport Fish

In the Division of Sport Fish, an increase in F&GF revenue will have several benefits including providing predictable and reliable funding sources for core management activities, helping offset current and future reductions in GF, and supplanting expiring capital appropriations and third party funded projects.

Stock Assessment

Chinook – The Chinook Salmon Research Initiative (CSRI; two capital appropriations totaling \$15 million), and Mat-Su fisheries capital appropriations (3 appropriations totaling \$7 million) will be fully expended in the next 1-2 years. CSRI funds, used to fund adult and juvenile salmon work on 12 indicator stocks across the state will be largely expended after the 2016 field season. Mat-Su capital appropriations that fund such projects as Susitna River drainage-wide Chinook salmon escapement estimates will also largely be expended after the 2016 field season. Increased F&GF revenue could be used to continue high priority Chinook salmon projects beyond the life of those CIP appropriations.

Groundfish – New and emerging needs for better information in Southeast Alaska, Northern Gulf Coast, Prince William Sound and Kodiak for species including rockfish – non pelagic and pelagic - and lingcod.

Resident Species – With few exceptions, the division is conducting little to no monitoring of the stock status of resident species. Past funding reductions eliminated many of the projects previously implemented. Most recently, Southeast trout and resident species projects in SE were eliminated in FY 2016. Increased F&GF revenue could be used to implement high priority trout projects statewide, and, in the Interior, Arctic grayling, northern pike, and burbot stock assessment.

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Enhancement

CIP funds have enabled increased annual Chinook salmon stocking levels from 150,000 to 200,000 smolt at Deception Creek, and from 150,000 to 400,000 smolt at Eklutna tailrace, beginning in 2014. Those funds will expire after several years.

FY2016 reductions resulted in the elimination of the Arctic Grayling stocking program (approx. 74,000 grayling), and reduction in rainbow trout stocking levels at Southcentral and Interior locations. Additional F&GF revenue could be used to re-implement and/or increase stocking for those species to or beyond pre-FY 2016 levels.

Additional F&GF revenue would also enable stocked waters assessment to take place so that we can assess and weigh the benefits associated with stocking specific locations and species and how well stocking activities provide increased fishing opportunities; past reductions to the division's base funds resulted in the elimination of stocked waters assessment. Additional funds would provide the ability to assess the benefits and success of our current program. It will also improve the division's ability to ensure the greatest benefit to anglers based on where fish are stocked, the frequency of stocking, and how many fish of certain species are stocked.

Invasive Species & Habitat

Northern pike eradication, culvert assessment and replacement, instream flow protection, and stream bank restoration projects could also be funded by increased F&GF revenue.

Future GF Reductions

General funds for the division have been reduced from \$7 million in FY 2015 to \$4.2 million in the Governor's FY 2017 amended budget, with future reductions likely. Increased F&GF revenue will help offset reductions in core services resulting from these GF reductions.

Chitina Dipnet Permit Fees and Kenai/Kasilof Sockeye Stamp

The department has historically issued 10,000-12,000 Chitina Dipnet permits. Assuming the same level of issuance, a fee of \$15 would generate \$150,000-\$180,000 annually for trash removal, vaulted latrine maintenance, and road and trail maintenance. The department would pursue contracts with DNR and DOT for these services.

The division estimates an annual total of 125,000 and 15,000 anglers respectively fish the Kenai and Kasilof River systems. It is unknown how many of these individuals target sockeye salmon. Additionally, the division issues approximately 35,000 Upper Cook Inlet Personal Use Salmon permits annually, the vast majority of which are fished in the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. It is likely that many individuals participate in both the sport and personal use fisheries, although the current version of the bill only includes sport fishing and not personal use fishing. A sockeye stamp fee could generate revenue for management, trash removal, toilets and facilities, and access. The department would pursue contracts with DNR, DOT, local governments and other agencies for these services.

Hunting License and Tag Fees in Selected Western States, 2016

	ALASKA		IDAHO		MONTANA		WASHINGTON		WYOMING		UTAH		COLORADO		NEVADA		
	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	Resident	Non-resident	
Hunting License	\$25	\$85	\$13	\$155 (e)	\$18 (e)	\$25 (e)	X	\$13	\$34	\$65 (g)	\$10 (d)	\$10 (d)	\$33	\$142			
Tag Fee																	
Black Bear	\$0	\$225 (b)	\$300	\$12	\$201 (f)	\$19	\$350	\$24	\$222	\$45	\$362	\$30 (i)	\$135 (i)	\$44	\$354	\$125 (h)	\$327 (h)
Brown Bear	\$25	\$505 (a)	\$655 (b)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Deer	\$0	\$150	\$200	\$20	\$317 (h)	\$16	\$597 (f)	\$45	\$434	\$43	\$326 (h)	\$30 (i)	\$93 (i)	\$34	\$379	\$55 (h)	\$267 (h)
Elk	\$5 (a)	\$305 (a)	\$405 (a)	\$31	\$432 (h)	\$20	\$851 (f)	\$50	\$497	\$57	\$591 (h)	\$50 (i)	\$218 (i)	\$49	\$629	\$150 (h)	\$1232 (h)
Goat	\$5 (a)	\$305 (a)	\$405 (a)	\$167	\$2117 (h)	\$125	\$1250	\$332	\$1652	\$127	\$2166 (h)	\$413	\$1518	\$254	\$2084	\$145 (h)	\$1227 (h)
Moose	\$5 (a)	\$405 (a)	\$505 (a)	\$167	\$2117 (h)	\$125	\$1250	\$332	\$1652	\$117	\$1416 (h)	\$213 (i)	\$713 (i)	\$254	\$2084	X	X
Sheep	\$5 (a)	\$430 (b)	\$555 (a)	\$167	\$2117 (h)	\$125	\$1250	\$332	\$1652	\$122	\$2266 (h)	\$513	\$1518	\$254	\$2084	\$145 (h)	\$1227 (h)
Musk Ox/Buff	\$505 (a)	\$1105 (a)	\$1505 (a)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Bison	\$10 (a)	\$455 (a)	\$655 (a)	X	X	\$125	\$1250	X	X	\$413	\$2522	\$413 (i)	\$1518 (i)	X	X	X	X
Caribou	\$5 (a)	\$330 (a)	\$430 (a)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Antelope	X	X	X	\$31	\$327 (f)	\$19	\$205	X	X	\$38 (a)	\$286	\$30 (i)	\$93 (i)	\$34	\$379	\$85 (h)	\$327 (h)
Mtn Lion	X	X	X	\$12	\$201 (h)	\$19	\$320	\$24	\$222	\$30	\$362	\$30 (i)	\$135 (i)	X	X	\$29	\$104
Turkey	X	X	X	\$20	\$103 (f)	\$14	\$168	\$16	\$45	\$16	\$72	\$35	\$100	\$21	\$101	\$20	\$50

Notes: This table presents fees for general hunting licenses (conservation / habitat stamp / permit / etc) and game tags / permits only (youth, elderly, veterans, disabled persons, lifetime, or combined hunting/fishing licenses are not included). In some locations or in specific circumstances, fees are charged for applying for a permit or for a drawing to hunt. The costs presented here include any application, drawing or special permit fees. An "X" indicates that there is no hunting for the species in the state.

- (a) This includes possible fees for application, drawing, or special permits.
- (b) Nonresident U.S. citizen who hunts brown/grizzly bear, Dall sheep or mountain goat must hire a licensed guide/outfitter or be accompanied by a relative who is an AK resident.
- (c) Nonresident hunters who are not U.S. citizens must hire a licensed guide/outfitter to hunt any big game animal.
- (d) This is for the required \$10 habitat stamp.
- (e) Montana requires res/nonres hunters to buy a \$8/\$10 conservation license and a \$10/\$15 base hunting license.
- (f) Montana nonresident deer combo (\$597) includes a Conservation, Base Hunting, State Lands and General Deer license and authorizes fishing and hunting of upland game birds, excluding turkey. Same for nonresident elk combo (\$851).
- (g) Idaho offers a special 2-day nonresident hunting license for \$57. Utah offers a 3-day nonresident hunting license for \$32.
- (h) Includes application fees. Entire tag amount plus nonrefundable application fee (\$14.75 in ID; \$14 in WY; \$25/\$26.50 for res/nonres in NV) must be submitted at time of application.
- (i) Figures here are lowest possible; costs vary depending on type of hunt. Resident black bear: \$30-\$166; nonresident bear: \$135-\$475; resident deer: \$30-\$168; non-resident deer: \$93-\$568; resident elk: \$50-\$513; nonresident elk: \$218-\$1505; resident moose \$213-\$413; nonresident moose \$713-\$1518; resident bison: \$413-\$1110; nonresident bison: \$1518-\$2615; resident pronghorn: \$30-\$55; nonresident pronghorn: \$93-\$293; resident cougar: \$30-\$58; nonresident cougar: \$135-\$475.