

RC22

Jake Abbott
907-209-4198
9325 Northland Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing a late comment in support of proposal 28, the proposal to legalize bear baiting near Juneau. I am the author of that proposal and would like to comment further on it after hearing testimony, and reading comments from the public. I would also like to explain my intent behind this proposal to the board.

I am an avid bow hunter, and by far one of my most favorite animals to chase is bears. Most of the bear hunting in southeast Alaska typically occurs via boat. Unfortunately I do not have the money to purchase a boat, and am relegated to hunting via road system. Since Juneau does not have any log road systems, it can be difficult to access quality areas where an archery hunter can effectively take quality animals. My proposal seeks to legalize bear baiting to provide a means by which an archery hunter, or hunters who wish to engage youth in bear hunting, can effectively take a black bear while hunting off of the road system.

I am adamant that the current bear baiting restrictions in regards to proximity of roads, buildings, etc. is sufficient based on the current regulatory scheme.

A theme that I have seen in the comments, and from the Department of Fish and Game is that somehow allowing bear baiting will result in an increased bear problem in the Juneau area. I find the Department's stance on this troubling because in 2003 the Board of Game in combination with the Department passed resolution 2003-142-BOG in response to a ballot initiative to ban bear baiting statewide. In that resolution, the Department stated "there is no evidence or data to suggest that there is a correlation between bear baiting and occurrence of food-conditioned bears near human habitation.." The Department's stance on this current proposal is directly in conflict with that statement.

To further expand on the above. I think it is fair to say that when a bear discovers a food source it does not think to itself "this is human food, I should go in to town and get more." The bear merely sees a good source and eats it. Much the same way that they are attracted to salmon on a stream.

Juneau's bear problem will always exist as long as individuals do not secure their food sources in town. Bear baiting will not make this any worse, and may actually make it better by eliminating some bears.

I believe that bear baiting can occur in Juneau, and on the road system in a controlled, ethical responsible manner. I believe that the current regulations would eliminate nearly all potential conflicts.

I would urge the board when considering this proposal to consider that part of this proposal was to provide access and means to hunters, especially archery hunters and youth, that do not have access to a boat.

I also urge the board to consider that though there was public comment in opposition of this proposal, the Juneau AC, with great support, approved this proposal, and during comments almost all members agreed that allowing bear baiting near Juneau would probably actually help eliminate some bear issues.

Thank you for your consideration,

- Jake Abbott