

**PROPOSAL 11**

**5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.**

Establish a minimum caliber rifle to be used to harvest moose in Unit 18 as follows:

Restrict the use of centerfire and rimfire rifles .224 caliber and smaller and require a minimum of .243 or 6 mm caliber centerfire rifles for the harvest of moose in Unit 18.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Many moose are killed every year and not harvested as a result of a lack of regulation requiring a minimum caliber rifle to be allowed for harvest of moose in Unit 18. Moose and the number of moose killed need to be accurately communicated, especially in areas that close upon a predetermined quota. Unfortunately, moose are shot with rifles and ammo that are inadequate to kill them.

Moose are one of the largest North American big game species. A common rifle to hunt moose in Unit 18 is the .223 Remington. It is true that centerfire 22 caliber rifles like the .223 and even smaller can effectively kill moose depending on shot placement. Unfortunately, with the high number of variables, perfect shot placement is not a guarantee every time a trigger is pulled, and often can end in a dead and unharvested moose. Because of this, the true number of moose killed is higher than what is reported at harvest, thus negatively impacting the number of moose that can be harvested for subsistence purposes. In addition, this is an ethical problem too. Many times, if a moose is shot with a .223 or smaller rifle, the moose will not fall where it was shot, but rather run off. It is not unusual to harvest moose that have been previously shot with .223 caliber rifles. These moose often cannot be harvested, since large portions are infected and abscessed. Another common situation is moose shot in the jaw by hunters attempting head shots with .223. Moose hit in the jaw by smaller caliber centerfire rifles can appear unharmed leaving the hunter to think they simply missed, when in reality, the moose travels a great distance shot in the jaw, left to starve, unable to chew its food. Finally, one of the most common uses of the .223 and other centerfire 22 caliber rifles and smaller in North America is predator/varmint hunting. As a result, a majority of the ammo loaded commercially for .223 and sold in Unit 18 use hollow point or other fragmenting ballistic tip bullets, none of which are made for the deep bone breaking penetration needed to effectively kill moose. Rather, ballistic tip and hollow point bullets so commonly loaded for the .223 are designed to penetrate and explode inside the body of the coyote, fox or other predator/varmint targeted. Frequently, when these types of bullets are used for big game, especially moose, the targeted animal is maimed by a bullet that comes apart before getting adequate penetration to effectively kill the moose.

**PROPOSED BY:** Bethel Fish & Game Advisory Committee

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