

Opposition to Proposal to Reinstate Aerial Gunning of Bears

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to reinstate the aerial gunning of bears—including sows with cubs—in the name of intensive management for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.

This practice is not only deeply inhumane, but it is not supported by science. There is no credible evidence that killing bears from the air leads to meaningful or sustainable recovery of caribou populations. These methods are rooted in outdated predator control models and fail to consider the complex ecological relationships that sustain balanced ecosystems.

In 2023 alone, 99 bears were killed, and 80 more in 2024. These are not just numbers—they represent the violent loss of sentient beings, often family units, that play a vital role in Alaska's wild landscapes. I am particularly disturbed that this program targets mothers with cubs, which is both unethical and destabilising to bear populations.

As someone who believes deeply in responsible wildlife stewardship and coexistence, I urge the board to pursue non-lethal, science-based approaches to caribou population recovery. Killing predators from helicopters is not a solution—it's a step backwards.

I respectfully ask that the Board of Game reject this proposal and instead invest in long-term habitat restoration, Indigenous knowledge partnerships, and conservation-based management strategies.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for the opportunity to make my voice heard in defence of Alaska's bears.

Sincerely,

Phoebe Pepper