

To: Alaska Board of Game, Department of Fish and Wildlife
From: Nicole St. Clair Knobloch
Re: To reinstate 5 AAC 92.111(c), the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Predation Management Area plan, to aid in achieving the Mulchatna caribou herd intensive management objectives.

Position: Oppose, or support as amended below

Dear ADFG:

Thank you for the opportunity for public comment on this matter. I am a Ph.D. candidate at Tufts University in wildlife disease ecology and a proponent of large predator inclusion in ecosystems to maintain healthy ecosystem functioning, as is your department.

I am writing to express concern that the proposed objectives for brown bear and wolf control to protect caribou calving may overlap/conflict with bear and wolf reproductive cycles and have the unfortunate effect of orphaning their offspring while protecting those of the caribou. As you know, both wolves and brown bears raise their offspring intensively for at least 2-3 years, putting the offspring at serious risk should they lose their parents. Yet culling entire families to address this issue, including adults of breeding age, would also present threats to the preservation of healthy populations of these species.

I assume you have considered the long-term population effects on these predator species and hope you will acknowledge this in an amended proposal – possibly to do alternate year cycles or target older individuals. I also hope you may pause this proposal in favor of considering what other contributors there may be to reduced caribou populations and take other caribou herd management actions before undertaking predator culling.

Thank you for your consideration.