



March 14, 2010

To: House Transportation Committee, Alaska Legislature  
Re: HB 267 – “An Act relating to travel by snow machine within five miles of the right-of-way of the James Dalton Highway”

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice-chair Johnson, and Representatives Johansen, Munoz, Petersen, Gruenberg, and Wilson,

Alaska Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (AK BHA) **opposes** HB 267 as worded to open the Dalton Highway five-mile corridor to unlimited snowmachine access from the Highway.

The effects of a very recent March 2010 Alaska Board of Game decision to dramatically increase the Central Arctic Caribou Herd bag limit for hunters in Game Management Unit 26B (encompassing a large area on both sides of the Dalton Hwy between Pump Station 4 and Prudhoe Bay) need to be carefully considered before this bill moves any further.

Communications with the Alaska Board of Game as to their future intent, should this bill pass, to waive the restrictions on transportation of hunters, their gear, and any game meat and trophies through the Dalton corridor, need to be instigated now in order to determine the full effects of passage.

What kind of increase in hunters using snowmachine access via the Dalton corridor to access Unit 26B, where residents can now take 5 caribou per day, will we likely see if this bill becomes law? Can the vitally important trucking industry along the haul road safely handle such an increase in private vehicles hauling snowmachine trailers during the winter months? Where will all those private vehicles/trailers park? What are the safety and enforcement concerns with opening up snowmachine access to large numbers of hunters?

This is basically a “build it and they will come” type of bill, in an area that has one of the harshest winter climates on earth and very few facilities. Except the state won’t be buliding any new facilities, parking areas, or

staging more enforcement and rescue personnel, as part of any fiscal note with this bill.

What every legislator should ask when considering this bill is: “Does this bill create more problems than it solves?”

If the answer to that questions is yes, as we firmly believe it is, then this bill should not be passed.

Sincerely,

Mark Richards

Co-chair Alaska Backcountry Hunters & Anglers