

RC22

January 27, 2014

ATTN: Alaska Board of Game
Interior Region Meeting
February 14, 2014

RE: Proposal 44, Limiting Non-resident sheep permits, proposed by
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Alaska chapter.

To All Board Members:

As an Alaskan resident and sheep hunter for some 40 years, I have hunted the Alaska Range and Brooks Range extensively, backpacking and carrying my longbow as a weapon of choice. Through the years I have witnessed some general and gradual changes while sheep hunting that for many of us process-oriented "old-timers" tarnishes and distracts from the overall experience:

First, the numbers of legal rams seen, and the age structure of the "trophies" taken (I am not a trophy hunter) has steadily decreased as hunting pressure from residents and non-residents alike has increased.

Secondly, the increasing numbers of non-resident sheep hunters and their guides has proliferated each and every area where I hunt, causing conflicts over fewer and fewer legal rams and diminishing the overall experience.

Finally, the commercial value of a guided sheep hunt (over \$15,000 per tag) has led to increasingly "aggressive" non-resident hunters and their guides as guides are pressured by the money to kill at any cost, and rules and regulations are being increasingly bent and broken. Since these guided hunts always overlap with resident hunters in area and season, there is increasing overcrowding and conflicts. For example, this year I witnessed a guide fly every drainage near my sheep camp at 10 pm; land on a sandbar, camp overnight and had his hunter kill a ram the next day – they were gone within 24 hours! Not illegal, but since we had hiked in over 20 miles into the area, 3 days under pack, and had been watching the same ram, it was certainly a disappointing experience for my wife and I.

It is apparent that something needs to be done to address this issue, and the Alaska Chapter of the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers is made up of experienced Alaska outdoors men and women who value all aspects of the hunt, not just success in terms of meat and horns.

Recognizing that the resource must come first, there is a social and cultural value also in the process and experience of the hunt itself, inherent to all Alaskans. And although I appreciate the economic impact and value of non-resident hunting in Alaska, unless further restrictions on sheep hunting by non-residents can be put in place, those of us who live here and also contribute our dollars to conservation and the resource will suffer. I urge you to adopt proposal 44.

Respectively submitted,
Doug Borland Sitka, Alaska