

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Division of Legislative Audit



P.O. Box 113300  
Juneau, AK 99811-3300  
(907) 465-3830  
FAX (907) 465-2347  
[legaudit@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:legaudit@legis.state.ak.us)

SUMMARY OF: A Special Report on the Department of Community and Economic Development, Guides and Transporters, October 16, 2003

### PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

In accordance with Title 24 of the Alaska Statutes and a special request by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee, we have conducted a review of various issues related to guide and transporter activities. Specifically, we evaluated: the level of impact the absence of a professional licensing board for guides and transporters has had in the enforcement of guiding statutes; the appropriateness of the fines and other enforcement mechanisms currently available; and, the adequacy of activity reports.

### REPORT CONCLUSIONS

With the termination of the Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB), oversight of licensed guides, assistant guides, and transporters has been left, for the most part, to the various governmental land-owner agencies at the state and federal level: (1) the National Park Service; (2) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; (3) the U.S. Forest Service; (4) the Bureau of Land Management; and, at the state level, (5) the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Mining, Land and Water.

In this decentralized, uncoordinated regulatory climate, we were repeatedly told by various agencies that they would welcome a more vigorous, centralized licensing and regulatory board in order to better carry out oversight over transporters and, to a lesser extent, licensed guides.

Guiding activities that take place in national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests were, with the exception of transporter activity, still highly regulated. Staff of the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service – utilizing many of the operating restrictions and requirements that were part of BGCSB regulations – has put in place systems emphasizing hunter safety and maximization of the “wilderness experience.” To a large extent, these agencies also provide an avenue for handling client complaints.

Most guiding activity takes place on state land. This activity is regulated primarily under the guiding statutes and regulations initiated after the sunset of BGCSB. Guiding is being done with less emphasis on consumer protection or hunter-client safety.

Annual activity reports from transporters are sufficient for occupational licensing purposes for which they are being used. Although the reporting requirements for guides is relatively more stringent, we do not see a clear reason why guide activity information needs to be collected as often as is currently required.

## FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendation No. 1

The legislature should consider enhancing the public protection and consumer safety aspects of current guide services statutes. Additionally, the legislature should consider reestablishing a guide/transporter services licensing board.

After BGCSB ceased to operate at the end FY 95, new statutes and associated regulations were put in place by the legislature and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED), respectively. The statutes and regulations set the parameters for guiding practices in Alaska. With the new statutes and regulations, key requirements and standards which had previously existed under the auspices of the board were no longer in place. Many of the omitted requirements were key to enhancing consumer protection and safety. Additionally, some of the missing requirements promoted more compliance among guides and transporters with land and game management requirements.

Revisions to current state law and regulation could put back in place important consumer protection and hunter safety elements that previously existed but are currently absent. While a guiding industry oversight board is not necessary to address the concerns set out above, a licensing-oriented board will likely provide a more dynamic regulatory regimen – allowing the revision of regulations on a regular basis to enhance professionalism by guides, consumer protection, and hunter safety. Accordingly, we further recommend that the legislature consider amending the current guide and transporter statute to reestablish a guide service licensing board.

October 16, 2003

Members of the Legislative Budget  
and Audit Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Title 24 of the Alaska Statutes, the attached report is submitted for your review.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
DIVISION OF OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING  
GUIDES AND TRANSPORTERS

October 16, 2003

Audit Control Number

08-30025-03

This audit report addresses the specific areas related to game guiding enforcement such as determining the implications the absence of a board has had on enforcement of current guiding statutes and regulations; assessing the sufficiency of current-level enforcement activity related to illegal guiding; and, presumably, game violations. In addition, we reviewed the permit and evaluation process used by the various federal agencies in their respective game management areas.

In our opinion, the public protection and consumer safety aspects of the current guide service statutes should be improved. The legislature should also consider reestablishing a guide/transporter service licensing board.

The audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government audit standards. Fieldwork procedures utilized in the course of developing the findings and discussion presented in this report are discussed in the Objectives, Scope, and Methodology section.

Pat Davidson, CPA  
Legislative Auditor

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# OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In accordance with Titles 24 of the Alaska Statutes and a special request of the Legislative Audit and Budget Committee, we conducted a review of the licensing and/or permitting of guides and transporters by the Division of Occupational Licensing; Division of Mining, Land, and Water; federal agencies such as the National Park Service, National Wildlife Refuge, United States Forest Service; and, Bureau of Land Management.

## Objectives

Our specific audit objectives were:

1. To determine the implications the absence of a board has had on enforcement of current guiding statutes and regulations.
2. To assess the sufficiency of current-level enforcement activity related to illegal guiding violations by both licensed and unlicensed guides.
3. To determine the purpose for transporter activity reports and if these reports are sufficiently comprehensive and timely to meet achieve the intended purpose.

## Scope:

We focused our review on the permitting process by state and federal agencies during 2002 and 2003, hunt reports and transporter activity reports in 2002, and complaint case investigation from 1997 to 2003.

## Methodology:

To accomplish the audit objectives, the following documents were reviewed:

- Applicable federal regulations and state guiding/transporter statutes and regulations
- Other states' guide-outfitter statutes and regulations
- Annual reports
- Licensing and investigation files for guides and transporters
- Professional hunter publications
- 2002 Sunset Review of the Colorado Office of Outfitters Registration

We also compared 1995 provisions of the former Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB) statute and regulations with the currently active guide/transporter statutes and regulations.

We interviewed the following individuals:

- Members of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association
- Staff of the Division of Occupational Licensing, Department of Community and Economic Development
- Staff of the Division of Mining, Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources
- Staff of the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection, Department of Public Safety
- Staff at the Department of Fish and Game
- Staff of the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management

Additionally, we conducted a survey of guide and transporter clients. Our survey sought responses to issues such as consumer protection, safety, fair guide practices, and overall hunt experiences.

## ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

The Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB) was allowed to sunset on June 30, 1994. Under AS 08.03.020, the board continued in existence until June 30, 1995 in order to conclude its administrative operations. Chapter 33, Section 3, SLA 1996 transferred the board's regulatory responsibility for guides and transporters to the Department of Commerce and Economic Development (DCED).<sup>1</sup> Guides and transporters are regulated by the department through the Division of Occupational Licensing (OccLic).

A licensing examiner at OccLic is assigned the function of administering and grading the guide and game management unit examinations, issuing initial and renewal licenses for all classes of guides and transporters, reviewing hunt and transporter activity reports from guide and transporter licensees, and referring violations to the investigation section.

An investigator at OccLic is assigned to conduct investigations of complaints received from guide and transporter clients, other guides and transporters, the licensing examiner, and other state or federal agencies. Investigations resulting in accusations<sup>2</sup> are sent to the Attorney General's office for review and acceptance. The accusation is then filed and sent to the respondent<sup>3</sup> who may request a hearing or default by not responding.

### Duties of DCED

DCED's statutory responsibilities include:

1. Preparing, grading, and administering a qualification examination for a registered guide license and a certification examination for each game management units where registered guides intend to provide big game hunting services.
2. Issuing registered guide, master guide, class-A assistant guide, assistant guide, and transporter licenses.
3. Compiling, maintaining, and publishing an annual roster of registered guides and master guides licensed.
4. Impose appropriate disciplinary actions on a guide and transporter licensee.

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<sup>1</sup> The department was renamed Department of Community and Economic Development in 1999.

<sup>2</sup> According to *Black's law dictionary, Centennial Edition (1891- 1991)*, an accusation is defined as "A formal charge against a person, to the effect that he is guilty of a punishable offense, laid before a court or magistrate having jurisdiction to inquire into the alleged crime."

<sup>3</sup> According to *Black's law dictionary, Centennial Edition (1891- 1991)* a respondent is "In appellate practice, the party who contends against an appeal or the party against whom the appeal is taken."

5. Requiring that an applicant seeking issuance or renewal of any class of guide or transporter licenses provide a signed statement declaring whether his right to obtain a hunting, guiding, outfitting, or transporting license has been revoked in Alaska or any other state and Canada.
6. Regularly disseminating information regarding examinations and other qualifications for all classes of guide licenses to the residents of the rural areas of the state.
7. Adopting procedural and substantive regulations.
8. Administering examinations for registered guides at least twice a year.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Alaska Statutes 16.05.407 and .408 require nonresident U.S. citizens and nonresident foreign nationals to be accompanied by a licensed guide when hunting specified species of big game in Alaska.<sup>4</sup> To hunt brown bear, grizzly bear, mountain goat or sheep in Alaska, nonresident U.S. citizens must obtain services of a guide unless they are accompanied by a state resident over 19 years of age who is within the “*second degree of kindred.*”<sup>5</sup> In addition to game listed for nonresident U.S. citizens, hunters who are foreign nationals must be accompanied by a licensed guide to hunt black bear, bison, caribou, deer, elk, moose, musk ox, wolf,<sup>6</sup> or wolverine.

### In 1973, the Legislature established the Guide Licensing and Control Board

In 1973, the legislature created the Guide Licensing and Control Board (GLCB).<sup>7</sup> The board was responsible for establishing guidelines for different classes of guide licenses, defining unlawful acts, and providing for the disciplining of guides. The board also had the authority to regulate guide activities through the adoption of regulations.

The prime sponsor of the legislation testified that the purpose of the board was to better manage the state’s fish and game, in addition to seeking out competent guides for licensure. The board of seven was to be made up of “*no more than three*” individuals who were guides and the remaining four members were to have “*general knowledge of the game resources of the state.*” All members were required to have “*a minimum of 10 years residence in the state.*”

### In 1976, the Legislature authorized establishment of Exclusive Guide Areas

In 1976, the legislature authorized the establishment of exclusive guide areas (EGAs).<sup>8</sup> Under the authority of the new law, GLCB adopted regulations to establish a more uniform and consistent criteria for awarding EGAs that included a point system based on demonstrated prior hunting or guiding experience in a given region or area.

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<sup>4</sup> Licensed Guide refers to all licensing categories: a registered guide, master guide, class A assistant guide, and assistant guides. Class A assistants and assistant guides are typically employed by a registered or master guide.

<sup>5</sup> According to an Alaska Department of Fish and Game hunter information publication, a second-degree of kindred means in relation to the hunter. The other individual may be: father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, spouse, grandparent, grandchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in law, stepfather, stepmother, stepsister, stepbrother, stepson, or stepdaughter.

<sup>6</sup> A guide is not required for hunting wolves in Game Management Units 13, 19, and 20.

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 17, SLA 1973

<sup>8</sup> Chapter 133, SLA 1976

Under the EGA system, licensed guides were given exclusive rights to conduct commercial hunts within a designated geographic area. Assignment of EGAs was done after the board evaluated criteria such as occupancy, historical use, and financial value of the guide's infrastructure in an area.

After nine years of litigation, the Alaska Supreme Court declared EGAs unconstitutional

In April 1979, a licensed guide and lodge owner named Owsichuk filed a lawsuit in Superior Court challenging the constitutionality of EGAs. Owsichuk sought authorization from GLCB to guide clients in a specific region and had been denied permission because another guide had exclusive rights to guide in that same area of the state.

In October 1988, the state Supreme Court issued a decision that the statute and related regulations establishing EGAs were unconstitutional. The court determined that EGAs were contrary to the "common use clause" provision of the Alaska Constitution since they provided big game guides the exclusive use of state resources in perpetuity.

EGAs had been granted to big game guides based on a seniority system. Big game guides were not required to pay any fees to the state for the EGAs nor were they restricted as to how long they could use the area. GLCB allowed guides to transfer or sell EGAs to other guides for a profit as though it were private property in which the state had no interest.

Justice Rabinowitz, in writing for the unanimous court, found this aspect of EGAs of particular concern. He stated in the court's opinion:

*Nothing in this opinion is intended to suggest that leases and exclusive concessions on state lands are unconstitutional. The statutes and regulations of the Department of Natural Resources authorize leases and concession contracts of limited duration, subject to competitive bidding procedures and valuable consideration. ... **In contrast, EGAs are not subject to competitive bidding, provide no remuneration to the state, are of unlimited duration, and are not subject to any other contractual terms or restrictions. Rather, ... they are granted essentially on the basis of seniority, with no rental or usage fee, for unlimited duration, and are administered in such a way that guides may transfer them for a profit as if they owned them. In these respects the EGAs resemble the type of royal grants the common use clause [of the state constitution] expressly intended to prohibit. Leases and concession contracts do not share these characteristics.** [emphasis added]*

Even before the Owsichuk decision was issued, the legislature had begun to reconsider public policy related to the guiding industry. In May 1988, the legislature established the Interim Task Force on Guiding and Game. The central objective of the task force was to examine the various problems and issues surrounding the commercial taking of big game in the state. The task force was also directed to evaluate how to deal with the businesses or professions that provided goods and services to big game hunters in the state.

At this time, GLCB was dealing with problems such as:

1. the best way to regulate air taxi operators who were operating very much like guides – calling themselves “outfitters;”
2. complaints from the general public that the current system of licensing guides or obtaining an EGA required an individual to “have the right connections” rather than necessarily being qualified to operate in a given area; and,
3. problems the Division of Fish and Wildlife Protection was having in enforcing guiding laws, due to the vague way in which they were written. The enforcement problems were due in large part to the difficulty in defining what constituted unlicensed guiding activity.

The legislative task force was given the responsibility to examine these problems and develop a proposed alternative regulatory approach. The task force recommended a new regulatory game board should be established with expanded regulatory authority over guide-outfitters (the new term for guides) and a newly designated licensing group – transporters.

#### Creation of the Big Game Commercial Services Board and the licensing of transporters

In 1989, the legislature established a new board with expanded authority in the wake of the Owsich decision and other changes taking place in the guiding industry. The new board was named the Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB). The name change reflected the expanded scope of the board’s authority which, in addition to licensing guides and their assistants, now also licensed individuals who provided transportation services to hunters.

New legislation allowed for the establishment of guide use areas (GUAs)<sup>9</sup> which would permit certain license holders to guide in designated geographic areas within the state’s 26 Game Management Units (GMU). GUAs would be assigned to guide-outfitters on a nonexclusive merit basis, replacing the unconstitutional EGA system.

The BGCSB legislation also restricted the commercial use of the term “outfitter” only to licensed guides, resulting in a new statutory title of guide-outfitter. This was done to reduce confusion over what services a consumer could expect when contracting for a big game hunt in Alaska. The term outfitter was used in most other licensing jurisdictions for an individual who performed services similar to those provided by guides in Alaska. Previously, some individuals who were not licensed guides, but were operating as unlicensed transporters, had begun using the term outfitter in their advertising.

Like its GLCB predecessor, BGCSB was organizationally placed under the auspices of the Division of Occupational Licensing in the Department of Commerce and Economic

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<sup>9</sup> GUAs, currently used, were developed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at the request of the Legislative Task Force on Guiding and Game.

Development.<sup>10</sup> The legislature, in intent language accompanying the legislation creating the board, stated it wanted BGCSB to establish a resource-based management system for allocating big game hunting opportunities among guide-outfitters.

The BGCSB oversight regimen was to:

1. Provide for the conservation of the game resources.
2. Provide for equal opportunity to all qualified guide-outfitters when access to hunting rights are assigned or reassigned.
3. Provide financial compensation to the state for the commercial harvest of Alaska's big game resources to be used for game management purposes.
4. Designate the Alaska Department of Fish and Game as the lead agency to formulate guide use areas within the department's game management units.
5. Provide for long-term stability and economic health of any commercial industry utilizing big game resources.
6. Include recommendations from private and public land owners in order to ensure statewide applicability.

The Department of Fish and Game, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Public Safety were tasked with providing the board with information, data, or technical assistance for the purpose of licensing and regulating activities of guide-outfitters, assistant guides, and transporters

Under BGCSB guide-outfitters were certified to guide in any area for which they qualified

It was not until January 1992 that GUA maps were first developed. The first regulations establishing how guide-outfitters could apply and qualify to operate in a GUA were not fully in place until January 1993. In July 1993, the Division of Occupational Licensing began assigning areas, on a non-restricted basis, to licensed guide-outfitters. Under the BGCSB regulations guide-outfitters could obtain permits for up to three GUAs, as long as they met the qualification requirements to operate in that area. Between July and October of 1993, the division had assigned 720 GUAs to over 300 licensed guide-outfitters.

BGCSB was not extended beyond 1995, new guide oversight statutes were adopted in 1996

After being established in 1989, the BGCSB was scheduled to terminate on June 30, 1993. The 1993 legislature did not extend the termination date of the board. Accordingly, BGCSB

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<sup>10</sup> The Department of Commerce and Economic Development has since been renamed the Department of Community and Economic Development.

entered its “wrap-up” year and, as provided by statute, was set to cease operations June 30, 1994.<sup>11</sup> The 1994 legislature extended the termination to June 30, 1994 which extended the effective close-out to the end of FY 95.<sup>12</sup> Under HB 102, the 1995 legislature sought to extend the board to 1998, but the measure died in committee.

In 1996, the legislature developed new statutes for the oversight of guides (the term guide-outfitter was dropped) and transporters.<sup>13</sup> The Division of Occupational Licensing (OccLic) continued to have the administrative responsibility for regulating guiding and transporting activities under the new oversight regimen. Many of the statutory and regulatory requirements previously vested with the BGCSB were eliminated, particularly some specific practices that had been previously listed as unethical.<sup>14</sup>

Specific responsibilities of BGCSB or board-implemented requirements that were eliminated include:

- coordination responsibilities with other state agencies such as the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Public Safety.
- various detailed operating standards that were previously set out in regulations.
- requirements that guide-outfitters submit a detailed operational plan to OccLic for each area they were authorized to guide hunters.
- statutory requirements that a guide’s license be revoked for violation of federal game laws.

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<sup>11</sup> Under AS 08.03.020(a), upon termination, a board was allowed to “*continue in existence until June 30 of the next succeeding year for the purpose of concluding its affairs.*”

<sup>12</sup> Chapter 95, SLA 94

<sup>13</sup> Chapter 33, SLA 96

<sup>14</sup> The BGCSB regulation addressing ethics reads as follows:

12 AAC 38.650 *GUIDE OUTFITTING ETHICS Register 129, April 1994. “Unethical activity” includes 1) failing to assist the Department of Fish & Game, Public Safety, and Commerce & Economic Development in determining the truth of any statements; 2) not fully cooperating with state and federal wildlife officials, not abiding by and advising clients and personnel of all applicable conservation and game statutes and regulations, or condoning a violation of them; 3) misrepresenting or not clearly defining rates, accommodations, and services to prospective clients before booking and acceptance of a deposit, or otherwise misleading prospective clients through false or fictitious advertising; 4) failing to make financial restitution to a client for a breach of contract by the guide-outfitter or the guide-outfitters' employees, if the breach is not attributable to fault of the client.*

Under current regulations, above items three and four are no longer listed as unethical activities. Accordingly, as discussed in the text under Recommendation No. 1, the Division of Occupational Licensing does not believe it has the regulatory authority to proceed against guides when receiving complaints from clients about contract breach or failure of a guide to deliver promised services.

Guides and transporters continued to be required to file activity reports with OccLic. These reports are required to be completed for each compensated hunt by guides and on an annual basis for transporters.

Regulation of guiding activity on federal land was left mostly to a variety of federal agencies

With the termination of a centralized guide board much of the regulation of guides and transporters fell on, or remained with, various federal agencies. The president of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association estimated that as much as 40% of all guiding activity takes place on lands managed by federal agencies. These lands are regulated by a variety of federal agencies, as follows:

1. Federal Wildlife Refuges – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) administers guiding activities on 16 federal wildlife refuges in the state.
2. National Parks – The National Park Service (NPS) administers guiding activities on the ten national parks located in the state.
3. National Forests – The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) administers guiding activities carried out on lands in the Chugach and Tongass National Forests.
4. Other Federal Lands – Guiding activities conducted on other federal lands in the state – not in national refuges, parks, and forests – are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Each federal agency brings a slightly different perspective to guide regulation. With the exception of BLM, the agencies begin with a primary focus on the client-hunter and the aesthetics of his or her experience. That is, the primary objective of NPS, USFWS, and USFS is to provide enjoyable and safe access to game in the national park, refuge, or forest.

USFS uses a carrying capacity analysis to determine the level of permitting activity in national forests. In determining how many guides are allowed to operate in the national parks and refuges, NPS and USFWS essentially adopted the state's old EGA concept. These two federal agencies: limit the number of guides that are allowed to operate; give each guide an exclusive area within the park or refuge; impose an extensive number of detailed operating requirements on the guides selected; and, if guides are found in violation of the agency's operating agreements, they may be subject to losing their right to guide altogether. See Exhibit 1, for an expanded discussion of how the various federal agencies regulate big game guide operations.

## Federal Agencies Regulate Guides in a Slightly Different Ways

Four federal resource agencies regulate an estimated 40% of the guiding activity in the state through a variety of permits, leases, concessionaire agreements, and other contractual documents. Each federal agency requires guides to submit a detailed operating plan which outlines such things as the number of hunters they plan on guiding in specified season, how food will be stored, how waste products will be disposed of, etc. The agencies also require the guide to submit a safety plan outlining how they will respond to various health emergencies or possible hunting accidents that may take place in the field. All agencies require guides to provide proof of insurance for a minimum of \$300,000 in liability coverage. And, of course guides must show evidence of having a valid business license and the necessary state guide or transporter license. Specific requirements of each federal agency are as follows:

National Park Service (NPS) – The park service issues exclusive concession contracts to hunting guides and incidental business permits (IBP) to transporters. Concession contracts are awarded through a competitive process. NPS prepares a *prospectus* that outlines the requirements for operations. Interested individuals/entities apply by submitting written proposals that respond to the evaluation criteria of the *prospectus*. IBPs are generally issued in a noncompetitive manner and generally will be issued as long as the commercial activity is permitted under park regulations.

Concession contracts are issued for five-year periods and renewed by competitive selection. It may also be transferred or assigned with prior written approval of NPS. Outfitter and guides have received *preferential right* to renewal of contract. Concession contract franchise fee is based upon consideration of the probable value to the concessionaire of the value of the privilege granted by the contract.

United States Forest Service (USFS) - The Forest Service requires a Special Use Permit (SUP) for all guides and outfitters. Transporters providing only point to point service, such as air taxi operators are not required to have a special use permit. However, an air carrier advertising hunts is considered an outfitter and must have a SUP. Permits are issued by the respective ranger district office for a term of one year for two consecutive years. A five year permit may be issued only after a permittee receives two years of satisfactory evaluations by USFS. Competitive-use permits are issued only when there's a need to limit the number of guides/outfitters in an area. In addition, the USFS utilizes the carrying capacity to determine the number of permits that can be issued in each guide use areas.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife (USFWS) – The Fish and Wildlife service issues special use permits for the 16 national wildlife refuges (NWR) located in Alaska. USFWS has identified 99 guide use areas (GUA) within the refuges, and with one exception each GUA is assigned exclusively to a single guide. An individual or entity may apply for as many as 10 GUAs but can only be awarded a limit of areas. This model was similar to that used by the old Guide Licensing and Control Board.

Permits are issued on a competitive basis. The applicant's proposal is reviewed by a panel which ranks the proposal based on seven criteria with established ranking factors. Permits are issued for five years and are renewable for an additional five years if all terms and conditions have been complied with and a record of satisfactory performance met during the initial term of the permit.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – The bureau issues a special recreation permit (SRP) to individuals wanting to carry out guiding activities on federal lands outside of national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests. Such permits are generally issued on a first come first serve basis for a term of five years. The permit is validated annually. Validation is dependent upon payment of annual fees, submission of bonds (if required), policies, licenses, and receiving a satisfactory rating or probationary annual performance rating. Permits may be issued on a competitive basis when an area's desired use level has been reached. There are currently no BLM lands in Alaska requiring competitive bidding for an SRP.

## Carrying out game management through guide oversight typically means limiting access

In a 1990 report to the 16<sup>th</sup> Legislature, the legislative task force stated the foremost purpose of any regulatory oversight system for guides was the “*conservation and management of big game resources.*” The report also stated in its preface that the directive to the task force had been to “*forge a new resource-based management system for allocating big game hunting opportunities among guide-outfitters.*”

This task force statement, regarding the allocation of opportunities among guides, reflects the central game management strategy involved with the regulation of the profession. Advocates for establishing more oversight of guides, in order to address game management concerns, invariably turn to the necessity of restricting commercial opportunities involved with guiding and transporting services. The 1990 task force stated it was important that a new guide oversight system “*ensure a viable industry, clearly basing any free market restrictions on wildlife management concerns*”. [emphasis added]

Imposing free market restrictions in the interest of game management was ostensibly the central rationale: (1) for the establishment of EGAs under GLCB prior to the Owsichuk decision; (2) for the establishment of GUAs; and, (3) behind the 1998 Board of Game (BOG) resolution, See Exhibit 2, asking the legislature to reestablish a board for “*review of the number of current operations.*”

## Limiting access is also seen as a way to develop a healthy, “world-class” industry<sup>15</sup>

Restricting the number of guides that can operate in a given region is also seen as a way to enhance and improve the guiding industry in Alaska. The guiding oversight structure of British Columbia, Canada, has been cited by knowledgeable guides as an example of a regulatory approach that has resulted in the development of a healthy, “world-class” big game guiding industry.

A prominent feature of the British Columbia system is use of exclusive guide areas. There are 245 guide-outfitters licensed to guide resident and nonresident hunters in an exclusive guide area with clearly defined and legally described boundaries within the province.<sup>16</sup>

Federal land managers, when taking over more responsibility for allocating regions to guides, in large part stayed with the precepts of the state’s old EGA structure; because by doing so, this would not only limit the impact on game resources but also would, in their view, promote a better wilderness experience. A big concern of these managers is their agency’s

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<sup>15</sup> We estimate that the guiding industry in Alaska takes in over \$40 million annually. This estimate is based on the average amount paid for a guided hunt reported by our survey respondents which is multiplied by approximately 5,000 activity reports received by the Division of Occupational Licensing each year. (See page 27, Appendix A)

<sup>16</sup> The information came from [http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/home/becoming\\_guide\\_outfitter.htm](http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/fw/home/becoming_guide_outfitter.htm) (September 23, 2003), a British Columbia government website. The website goes on to state that guide areas vary considerably in size and availability of big game species. Guide outfitters in the province hire about 1,100 assistant guides each year and guide approximately 4,500 hunters annually.

## **Board of Game Has Repeatedly Sought Establishment of Oversight Board for Guides and Transporters**

A March 18, 2003 letter from Board of Game Vice-Chair Sommerville to House Speaker Kott and Senate President Therriault stated in part

*[The board of game is] responsible for identifying and establishing intensive management programs, predator control programs and plowing through convoluted subsistence processes and procedures to establish coherent wildlife management policies and programs. **One of the biggest stumbling blocks has been the inability of the state to establish some reasonable controls on the guiding and transporter industries.** [emphasis added]*

*Unregulated guiding operations and uncontrolled access by transporters to remote areas of our state have created significant and unnecessary conflicts. Congestion, wanton waste, complaints from clients, safety concerns and major conflicts with local hunters has created a climate of hostility in some areas. In addition, the present situation does little to improve the image of Alaskan fish and wildlife management programs and the users dependent on them.*

*The most logical solution is to recreate a Board that has the function of overseeing the big game guiding and transporter industries. Standards for licensing of guides, safety standards, testing where appropriate, monitoring and investigating client complaints, enforcing reporting requirements and the establishment and enforcement of ethics standards are some of the responsibilities that could be delegated to a [guide] board.*

Earlier, in May 2002, Board of Game Chair Grussendorf submitted board resolution 98-127 which asked chairpersons of the Senate and House Resources Committees to reinstate a guide board, and even suggested that it would be most appropriate to place the board under the “auspices of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.” The cited resolution stated in part...

*...the board has received requests and concerns from guides and the public regarding commercial guiding, outfitting, and transporting activities and the impact that these activities have on game resources of Alaska and hunt conditions.*

*... the Board of Game requests that the legislature reinstate the Big Game Commercial Services Board or incorporate that responsibility to an existing board or agency, and*

*...that the legislature delegate authority over guides, outfitters, and transporters to a Big Game Commercial Services Board **and that a review of the number of current operations to be considered to be a priority for that board.** [emphasis added]*

inability to limit transporter<sup>17</sup> activity in the parks and refuges. This activity is seen as being beyond the control of the managers. They see its growth as threatening the aesthetic appreciation of the wilderness experience, because too many other hunters and users are being brought out to their lands at the same time. These managers would welcome a more vigorous state regulatory regimen over such activity, as a way to restrict transporter operations in their areas.

Representatives of the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA) believe that reestablishment of restricted guide areas, if not EGAs, is critical to improving the guiding industry in Alaska. From their perspective, such action will give guides more of a stake in not only the number of game animals in their territory, but also in the size of the animals.

In APHA's view, the relaxed licensing and area assignment regimen that has been put in place since the sunset of BGCSB has been counterproductive to developing a healthy, viable guiding industry in Alaska. They recognize the constitutional defects in the old system, but believe an area assignment process could be established that satisfies the requirements set out by Justice Rabinowitz, in *Owsichek*, and presumably pass constitutional review.

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<sup>17</sup> According to our survey approximately 66% of the clients of transporters are Alaskan residents.

## REPORT CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of our review was to evaluate what impact, if any, has the absence of a professional licensing board for guides had in the enforcement of guiding and game statutes and regulations. As part of this objective, we were directed to evaluate the sufficiency of investigative and legal support related to the regulation of guiding and if penalties and enforcement mechanisms, currently available, are appropriate.

A secondary objective of our review was to evaluate the purpose and need for transporter activity reports – specifically, if the reports are sufficiently comprehensive and timely to accomplish reporting objectives.

As discussed in the Background Information section, with the termination of Big Game Commercial Services Board (BGCSB), oversight of licensed guides, assistant guides, and transporters has been left, for the most part, to the various governmental land-owner agencies at the state and federal level: (1) the National Park Service (NPS), (2) the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), (3) the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), (4) the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and, at the state level, (5) the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Mining, Land and Water.

In this decentralized, uncoordinated regulatory climate, we were repeatedly told by various agencies that they would welcome a more vigorous, centralized licensing and regulatory board in order to better carry out oversight over transporters, and to a lesser extent, licensed guides.

Guiding activities that take place in national parks, wildlife refuges, and forests were, with the exception of transporter activity, still highly regulated. Staff of NPS, USFWS, and USFS – utilizing many of the operating restrictions and requirements that were part of BGCSB regulations – has put in place systems emphasizing hunter safety and maximization of the “wilderness experience.” To a large extent, these agencies also provide an avenue for handling client complaints.

Most guiding activity takes place on state land. This activity is regulated primarily under the guiding statutes and regulations initiated after the sunset of BGCSB. As discussed on the following page, because of this, guiding is being done with less emphasis on consumer protection or hunter-client safety.

Annual activity reports from transporters are sufficient for occupational licensing purposes for which they are being used. Although the reporting requirements for guides is relatively more stringent, we do not see a clear reason why guide activity information needs to be collected as often as is currently required.

Further discussion and analysis related to our conclusions is as follows:

Overall, the oversight of guides and transporters has lessened without a licensing board

New statutes and regulations put in place with the termination of BGCSB are not as rigorous as those that existed when the board was in place. Because of the way in which statutes and regulations are currently structured, the Division of Occupational Licensing (OccLic) has difficulty imposing any disciplinary actions against guides or transporters who may be operating in an unsafe or unethical manner.

We reviewed all complaints received by OccLic involving guides and transporters between 1997 and through 2003. A total of 50 complaints were received from clients about guides. For the 34 cases closed at the time at fieldwork, 12 had been closed because OccLic had no authority in statute or regulation to proceed against the guide involved.<sup>18</sup> Most, if not all, of these cases could likely have been more vigorously investigated under the prior BGCSB regulations and statutes. Primarily, the less stringent guide ethics requirements currently in place, undercut the division's authority and ability to actively investigate hunter-client complaints about guide activities.<sup>19</sup>

Under current statutes and regulations, put in place after the sunset of BGCSB, hunter safety is less of a priority. Present statutes require only the assistant guide to have a first aid card issued by the Red Cross or a similar organization at initial licensure. Previously, all licensees were required to obtain such certification. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) certification is also not required for licensure of all guides. There is no requirement upon license renewal that any licensee possess current certification on first aid and CPR. In other jurisdictions that license guides, such requirements are a standard.

As discussed in the Background Information section, consumer protection and safety were more of a priority under the former BGCSB. Unethical activity<sup>20</sup> was clearly defined in statutes, and guide ethic standards were established in regulations. For example, under BGCSB, guides were required by law to have a signed written contract with clients prior to

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<sup>18</sup> At the time of fieldwork, in addition to the 34 cases closed after investigative activity, another six were administratively closed because they had been open for longer than a year and did not represent an imminent danger to public health.

<sup>19</sup> OccLic initiated licensing sanctions in ten of these cases because the guide involved had been adjudicated by the courts or departmental hearing officer as being in violation of a state guiding, game law(s), or regulation(s).

<sup>20</sup> 1995 Alaska Statute 08.54.590 (14) defined *Unethical Activity* as specifically including:

*(1) a deception or misrepresentation involving prospective or actual clients either before, during, or following the provision of big game commercial services, including misrepresentations through private or public advertising of the type, duration, cost, or conditions of the services (2) making a guaranty that species or certain number of species will be taken on a hunt (3) engaging in unsafe or unsportsmanlike activities ... including violations of state hunting or big game commercial services statutes or regulations or (4) accepting a deposit for big game commercial services [without a signed written contract].*

accepting a deposit from them (see footnote 20). Now, written contracts are often not used – 21% of the clients we surveyed reported they did not have a written contract with their guide.

### Transporter activity reports are appropriately sufficient and timely for the purposes involved

Under current regulation, licensed guides and transporters are required to file what are termed activity reports with OccLic. These reports set out information about what guiding and transporter activity is taking place, what assistants are being used, how much game is being taken, and other information about guide and transporter-accompanied hunters. While guides are required to complete their activity reports within 30 days of the end of their hunt, transporters are only required to file an activity report annually.

The primary use of these reports is for OccLic internal review and investigative purposes. When guides send in activity reports in advance of their hunts, OccLic does check the intended GUA, specified in the report, against the regions qualified for the guide involved. According to OccLic staff we interviewed, the Department of Fish and Game makes no use of the game information set out in the reports. Transporters are not limited to specific GUAs and the information on their reports is typically not critical to any internal review process by OccLic. Accordingly, the annual reporting required of transporters is adequate, given the needs of OccLic for the information.

### Using an occupational guide board to manage game is problematic

Since establishment of the original guide board in the early 1970s, game management has been part of the public policy rationale for regulating guides and transporters. This may be attributable to finding the statute that officially recognizes and requires guiding services be used by certain types of hunters in the wildlife management section of state law. The requirement that nonresident hunters be accompanied by guides is set out in Title 16 and actually predates the legislation establishing the statute that set up the first guide board.

All state and federal resource agency managers we interviewed believe that an active oversight board, with the authority to restrict guiding and transporting activities through the licensing process, would be a valuable tool in managing game resources. Specifically, most commented that more control was needed over the activities of licensed transporters. Both federal and state resource managers saw possibilities that an active board, with broad authority to limit where transporters operated, could be valuable in reducing pressure on game resources<sup>21</sup>.

The Board of Game (BOG) has repeatedly taken the position that a guide board would help them in their job of managing the state's game resources. Since 1998, on three separate occasions, BOG has either adopted a formal resolution or written a letter to legislative leaders asking that a guide board be reestablished. On each of these occasions, BOG stated

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<sup>21</sup> Using the addresses of clients obtained for our survey, Alaska residents are a majority of the transporter's clients, while non-Alaskans are a majority of a guide's clients.

such a board was needed to alleviate and better manage the impacts that guides and transporters were having on state game resources. This emphasis on a guide board's prospective impact of game management is particularly reflected in the text of former BOG Chairman Grussendorf's letter which suggested that any such reconstituted board be placed under the auspices of the Department of Fish and Game.

When implementing a drawing permit hunt for brown bears in the Haines area (Game Management Unit 1D), the BOG findings stated that *"a lack of [a guide services board] and the inability to limit the scope of operation pertaining to individual big game commercial service providers has detrimentally affected guide hunter allocation."* Accordingly, the 2002 board limited nonresidents to 20 bear permits, to be distributed on the basis of a drawing.

Utilizing an occupational licensing board, to achieve game management objectives, may limit employment access to the profession. One of the primary responsibilities of any occupational board is to enhance public health and safety by setting and maintaining minimum competency requirements for the profession. In Alaska's sunset process, one of the criteria used to evaluate a board is *"the extent to which the board, commission that regulates entry into an occupation or profession has presented qualified applicants to serve the public"*<sup>22</sup>.

Imposing dual responsibilities on an occupational board to issue licenses to all individuals that meet the minimum competency requirements for licensure, while at the same time restricting employment opportunities to meet game management objectives, would be difficult. While it is likely a EGA-like system could be developed that would pass constitutional review, it is just as likely that many of the individuals currently licensed as guides, or many assistants who aspire to be licensed guides, will be prevented from operating because of a return to restricted operational access to state-owned lands.

Essentially, land-management agencies at both the state and federal levels, are acting in a game management role through the restrictions they place on permits and the number of permits they issue in a given area. A reestablished guide board, with statutes and regulations updated to include business best practices, would improve the tools available to land managers regarding the quality of the licensed guides to whom they issue permits. But, we believe the current separation of game management objectives (currently done by the land managers) from an occupational licensing function is prudent.

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<sup>22</sup> Alaska Statute 44.66.050(c)(7)

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendation No. 1

The legislature should consider enhancing the public protection and consumer safety aspects of current guide services statutes. Additionally, the legislature should consider reestablishing a guide/transporter services licensing board.

After BGCSB ceased to operate at the end FY 95, new statutes and associated regulations were put in place by the legislature and DCED, respectively. The statutes and regulations set the parameters for guiding practices in Alaska. With the new statutes and regulations, key requirements and standards which had previously existed under the auspices of the board were no longer in place. Many of the omitted requirements were key to enhancing consumer protection and safety. Additionally, some of the missing requirements promoted more compliance among guides and transporters with land and game management requirements.

Key requirements, currently no longer in place with the sunset of BGCSB, are as follows:

1. There are no “business ethics” standards established for how guides must conduct their operations. Previously, BGCSB adopted guide-outfitting ethics included what could be termed “best practice” provisions. These unethical activities included the following practices:
  - misrepresenting or not clearly defining rates, accommodations, and services to prospective clients before booking and acceptance of a deposit
  - misleading prospective clients through false or fictitious advertising
  - failing to make financial restitution to a client for a breach of contract by the guide-outfitter or the guide-outfitter employees, if the breach is not attributable to the fault of the client
  - contracting for more hunts or for more hunters at any one time than the guide-outfitter or the guide-outfitter employees can adequately serve
  - not maintaining and providing livestock, mechanical equipment, hunting and camping gear, food supplies, and cooking facilities of a quality and condition necessary to provide services equal to or better than those described in the guide-outfitter’s advertising, correspondence, verbal declaration, or contractual agreements.

Currently, no such “best practices” regulation is in place. As a result, OccLic investigators have no basis to proceed on many of the various complaints received by the

division. Previously, OccLic investigators could conduct a formal investigation of many of the practices which might serve as a basis for some licensing action against the guide or transporter involved. Now, typically OccLic must advise people with these type of complaints to consult their contract and take costly legal action against the individual involved.

An example of the above “best practice” situation in our guide survey is that of a client who had contracted for and prepaid for a hunt scheduled after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. He canceled his trip but was denied a refund or a rescheduled hunt. The client filed a complaint with OccLic, and the division was forced to advise the complainant that there was no administrative basis for possible sanction under current statutes and regulations.

2. Requirements for GUA registration have been significantly reduced. Qualifying to register for GUAs has become much easier under the new regulations. Guides are no longer required to:

- Provide proof of access to land. Previously, guides were required to provide evidence that they had appropriate authority to operate in their assigned GUA. For federal lands the guide had to file, with OccLic, documentation showing they had authority from the federal agency involved. For individuals operating on state lands, the guides had to show they had the necessary permits from DNR.

It is unlawful, under current statute, to knowingly enter or remain without a prior authorization while providing big game hunting services on private land only. There are a number of guides currently delinquent in payment of their DNR land use permits and using state land without appropriate permits which are, accordingly, in trespass status. Although state law requires payment-in-full of all license fees before a license is renewed,<sup>23</sup> it does not require guides to be current on fees owed for special or land use permits issued by DNR. There is currently no statutory licensing requirement tying the guide’s outstanding state land use permit fee with their license issuance or renewal.

- Submit an operational plan for the GUA. Previously, guides were required to file an operational plan with OccLic outlining how they intended to operate within their assigned region(s). Submission of operational plans for GUAs is no longer required.

Plans were required to include such information as: (1) the location and type of base camps to be used; (2) the estimated number of clients to be guide-outfitted; (3) big game species to be hunted and the estimated number of animals to be taken; and, (4) methods used to transport people, equipment, and supplies. Additionally, previous regulations had sanctions in place, and would give OccLic a basis for investigative

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<sup>23</sup> AS 08.54.660 (b)4

action, in the event a guide deviated from an operations plan without notifying the department.<sup>24</sup>

Under current statutes and regulations, a guide only needs to notify OccLic within 30 days before conducting big game hunting services in his authorized GUA. Annually, he is required to submit his registered guide number, guide areas registering for, and the location of his camp. Guides operating on federal lands are, comparatively, very regulated. Many of the requirements that were dropped by the state after the board's termination can be found in various federal permits and/or concessions. Currently, guides who hunt on federal land are required to submit operational plans with very similar content.<sup>25</sup>

- Hold valid first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification. Previously, guides were required to obtain and maintain appropriate certification in first aid and CPR training. They were required to show documentation of such certification to OccLic to keep their license in good standing. As with the operational plan requirements, this is a standard requirement for guides seeking operating permits from federal resource agencies – but is not necessary for conducting hunts on state-owned lands. Currently, only the assistant guide is required by statute to have a first aid card issued by the Red Cross or a similar organization. The CPR requirement was eliminated for all classes of guides.
3. License sanctions for multiple consumer complaints or federal violations are no longer in place. Under the prior BGCSB statutes, following a hearing, the board could discipline guides after receiving written complaints from clients from three separate hunting parties over a two-year period. Also, a guide or transporter previously faced possible sanctions from BGCSB if they violated federal game laws or guide services regulations. Current state law and regulation have no such provisions. OccLic cannot sanction a guide or transporter who has violated a federal game law unless the court orders license suspension or revocation as part of its sentencing
  4. Civil fines for violations of guide statutes reduced dramatically<sup>26</sup>. Currently, a guide or transporter violating professional statutory provisions can be fined up to a maximum of \$1,000. Under BGCSB regimen the maximum fine was set at \$30,000.

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<sup>24</sup> 12 AAC 38.880, GROUNDS FOR REVOCATION OR SUSPENSION OF A USE AREA REGISTRATION, Register 129, April 1994

(a) *The board will, in its discretion, revoke or suspend a use area registration for the following reasons: ...*  
(2) *a deviation from an operations plan without notifying the department under 12 AAC 38.830(b).*

<sup>25</sup> The mandatory operating plan must include, as an example, the following: 1) *the uses allowed, the total amount of use authorized, in terms of service days, hunts, or other appropriate unit of measure...*; 3) *description of authorized area of use*; 4) *liability insurance ...*; 8) *operating and safety plans ...*; 11) *compliance with federal, state, and local laws and ordinances.*

<sup>26</sup> To provide a perspective on the \$1,000 fine, the average cost of a guided hunt based on our survey results is over \$7,500.

5. Qualification examination is required only for registered guides. Qualification requirements under BGCSB oversight were more stringent. Under BGCSB regulations, both assistant and registered guides were required to pass an examination that included an oral examination for the guide-outfitter category. Currently, only the registered guide is required to take a qualification and GUA examination. Class-A assistant guides, and assistant guides, do not have to pass a qualification examination; all that is required is for them to pay the necessary licensing fee and certify they have had some hunting experience in the state.
6. Scope of services for guides and transporters. The BGCSB established license requirements for guides and those individuals who provided transportation services to hunters. While the current licensing structure maintains both guide and transporter licenses, there is a lack of clear distinction between the services that can be provided by a guide versus a transporter. Both the Department of Public Safety, Fish and Wildlife officers and OccLic investigators report difficulties in investigating potential violations of transporters providing guide services because they view the current statutes as vague and complicated.

Revisions to current state law and regulation could put back in place important consumer protection and hunter safety elements that previously existed but are currently absent. While a guiding industry oversight board is not necessary to address the concerns set out above, a licensing-oriented board will likely provide a more dynamic regulatory regimen – allowing the revision of regulations on a regular basis to enhance professionalism by guides, consumer protection, and hunter safety. Accordingly, we further recommend that the legislature consider amending the current guide and transporter statute to reestablish a guide service licensing board

## APPENDICES

As part of our audit, we surveyed guide and transporter clients regarding their concerns on issues such as consumer protection, safety, and fair trade practices related to big game hunting and transportation services. We also asked about their overall hunt experience and the related costs.

Identifying the clients to survey was a two-step process. First, guides<sup>27</sup> and transporters were randomly selected from the Division of Occupational Licensing database. Then client names were selected from either the hunt reports submitted by guides or from activity reports submitted by transporters. There were 332 guide client surveys and 165 transporter client surveys distributed.

Appendix A reports the results of the guide surveys. A total of 158 (48%) guide-clients responded to the 332 surveys distributed.

Appendix B reports the results of the transporter surveys. A total of 50 (31%) transporter-clients responded to the 165 surveys distributed.

In both appendices, the number of responses will not reflect the total number of surveys received since some questions may have multiple responses.

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<sup>27</sup> Guide under this context means both registered and master guides who are the only ones with authority to contract for guided hunts.

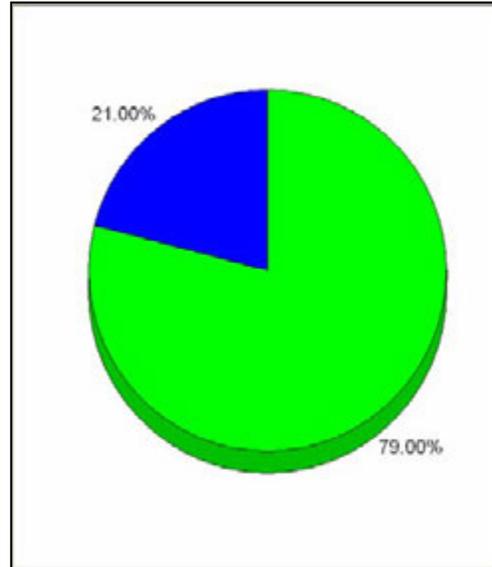
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Appendix A

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Guide Clients – Survey Results

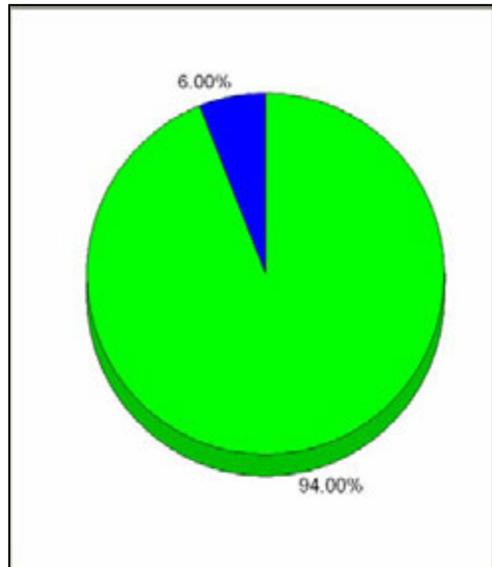
Question No. 1 – Did you have a written contract with the guide?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	123	79.00%
■	No	32	21.00%



Question No. 2 – Were you satisfied that you received all of the hunt and camp services set out in the contract?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	116	94.00%
■	No	7	6.00%



## Appendix A

### Department of Community and Economic Development Guide Clients – Survey Results

Question No. 3 - If you did not receive all the services that were contracted for, please list or summarize deficiencies. Some of the comments on deficiencies are listed below:

- *No place or way to dry clothes. Lack of communication between camps. Guide didn't want to get game animal out and had to flag airplane to get guide to get animals out.*
- *The combination brown bear and caribou hunt in 1998 was contracted with master guide. Master guide dropped client off with another guide. Expected client to carry his gear and guide supplies equipment a couple of miles to make camp. Guide was supposed to fly back every day and bring supplies. Never showed up for 5 days. Showed up on 6<sup>th</sup> day and client told guide to bring him back to Anchorage.*
- *They advertised home cooked meals, shower, sauna, their own string of mountain horses. But I was stuck with two boys that never cooked a meal, they boiled some water, most of the time I fixed peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. If you will take the time to watch the video I am sending you and read my letter and daily notes you will understand why I am upset.*
- *Outfitter had me with a guide who did not know the river or how to handle large raft. He was also arrogant and put my life in jeopardy on more than two occasions. Consequently we lost 5 days of hunt or ½ of what I have contracted for. I have written and discussed with Alaska Fish and Game<sup>1</sup> and they tell me there is nothing they can do. This outfitter is well known and I believe he is being protected.*
- *Lack of equipment, guides' owner was physically unable to perform his duties.*

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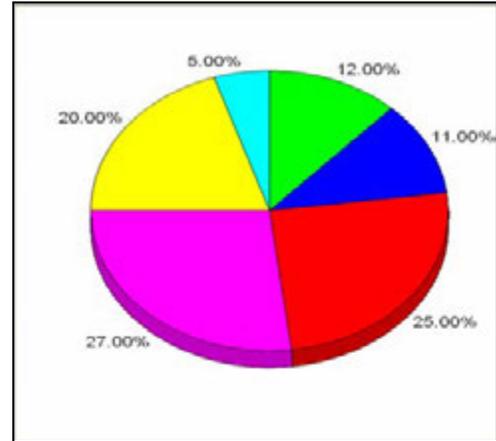
<sup>1</sup> DOL Investigator called client in February 2003 and indicated that he would interview the guide in March but did n't think he could do anything.

Appendix A

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Guide Clients – Survey Results

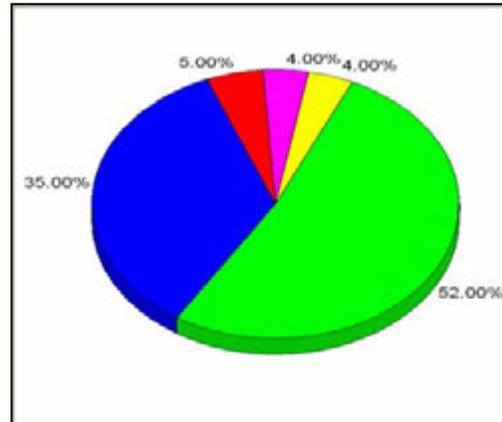
Question No. 4 – How much did you pay your guide for your hunt?

	Dollar Range	Number	Percent
■	0 - 2,999	18	12.00%
■	3,000 - 4,999	17	11.00%
■	5,000 - 7,999	38	25.00%
■	8,000 - 9,999	41	27.00%
■	10,000 – 14,999	31	20.00%
■	15,000 and over	7	5.00%



Question No. 5 – How much do you estimate that you spent in Alaska related to your hunt (excluding airfare to/from the state and guided hunt cost)?

	Dollar Range	Number	Percent
■	0 - 1,999	80	52.00%
■	2,000 – 4,999	55	35.00%
■	5,000 – 7,499	8	5.00%
■	7,500 - 9,999	6	4.00%
■	10,000 and over	6	4.00%



Question No. 6 – What was the ownership status of the land you hunted on?

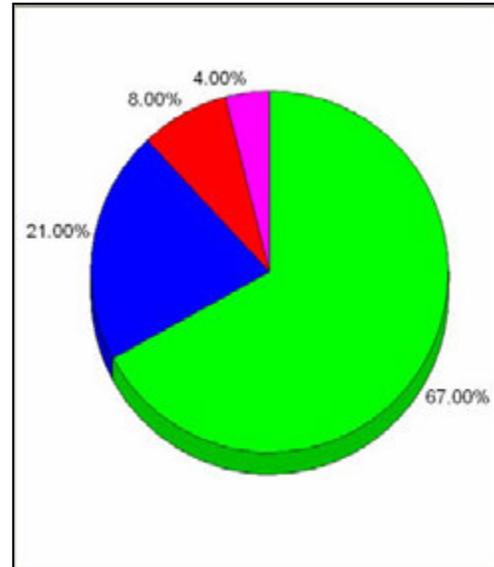
Responses	Number	Percent
Do not know	73	42.94%
Other State Owned	25	14.71%
Alaska Native Owned	18	10.59%
Nat'l Wildlife Refuge	15	8.82%
Nat'l Park Service	10	5.88%
Other Federal Land	10	5.88%
U.S. Forest Service	7	4.12%
Other	7	4.12%
State Park Service	5	2.94%
Private	0	0.00%

Appendix A

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Guide Clients – Survey Results

Question No. 7 – How would you rate your overall hunt experience?

Satisfaction	Number	Percent
Very Satisfied	105	67.00%
Somewhat Satisfied	33	21.00%
Not Very Satisfied	12	8.00%
Not At All Satisfied	6	4.00%



Question No. 8 – Please indicate the factors that resulted in a less than satisfactory hunt experience.

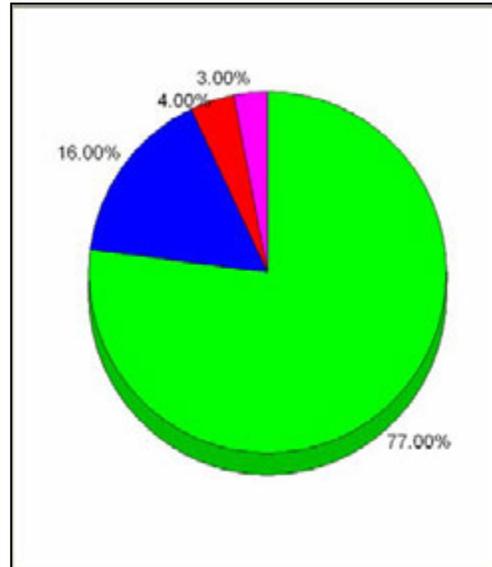
Responses	Number	Percent
Unsuccessful Hunt	12	22.0%
Lack of game animals in the area	11	20.0%
Bad weather	6	11.0%
Other	6	11.0%
Incompetent guides and/or assistant guides	5	9.0%
Poor camp conditions (inadequate shelter, poor or limited food)	4	7.0%
Inadequate or poor equipment	4	7.0%
Put in an unsafe situation	3	5.5%
Presence of too many other hunting parties	3	5.5%
Lack of proper physical conditioning necessary for the hunt	1	2.0%

## Appendix A

### Department of Community and Economic Development Guide Clients – Survey Results

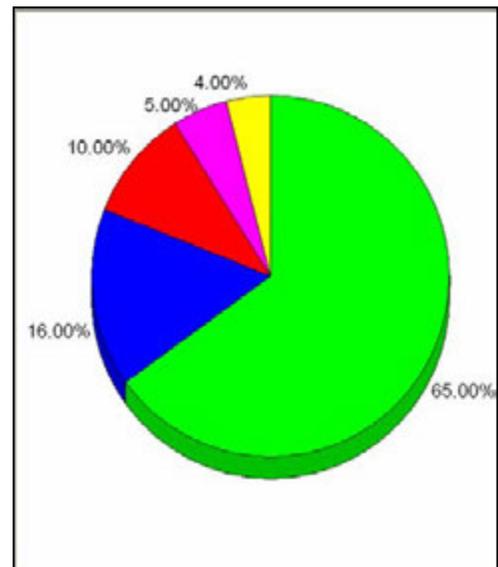
Question No. 9 – Based on your experience with this guided hunt, how likely would you return in the future to hunt big game in Alaska with a guide?

Return To Alaska	Number	Percent
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Very Likely	119	77.00%
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Somewhat Likely	25	16.00%
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Not Likely	6	4.00%
<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Very Unlikely	4	3.00%



Question No. 10 – How would you rate the overall competency of your guide and/or assistant guide?

Guide Competency	Number	Percent
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Excellent	99	65.00%
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Very Good	25	16.00%
<span style="color: red;">■</span> Good	15	10.00%
<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> Fair	8	5.00%
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> Poor	6	4.00%



Appendix A

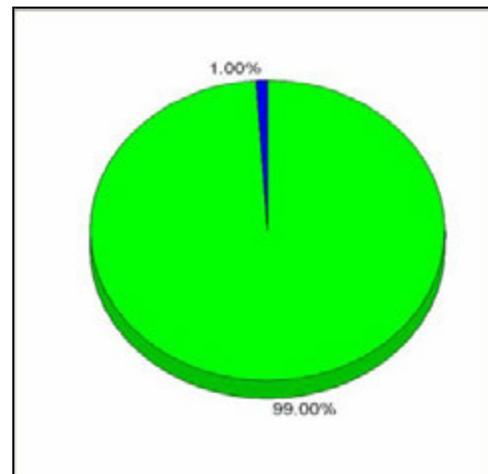
Department of Community and Economic Development  
Guide Clients – Survey Results

Question No. 11 – How much contact did you have with the registered guide?

Responses	Number	Percent
In the field for all or most of the time	115	76.16%
In the field less than half the time	17	11.26%
In the field at least once during the hunt	5	3.32%
Brief contact in person at the beginning/end of hunt	11	7.28%
Brief contact by phone at the beginning/end of hunt	1	.66%
No contact	2	1.32%

Question No. 12 – Were you aware that guides are licensed by the State of Alaska?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	152	99.00%
■	No	1	1.00%

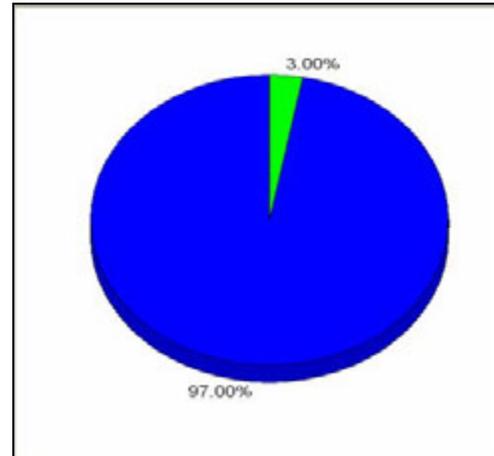


Appendix A

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Guide Clients – Survey Results

Question No. 13 – Did you file a complaint with the State of Alaska, Division of Occupational Licensing, regarding some aspect of your guided hunt?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	4	3.00%
■	No	148	97.00%



None of the clients who filed a complaint were satisfied with how the complaint was handled. Dissatisfaction was due to the client’s perception of Occupational Licensing’s inaction and/or lax licensing standards.

We asked the guide clients to provide any other comments that they would like to share about their guided hunt experience in Alaska. Fifty-one clients provided additional comments, most of which were positive about the hunt experience, the guide’s competence and Alaska’s scenery. Some commented that, “*it was the hunt of a lifetime.*” Those that made negative comments were typically related to unsuccessful hunts and related to either the lack of game animals or the high-price of the hunts.

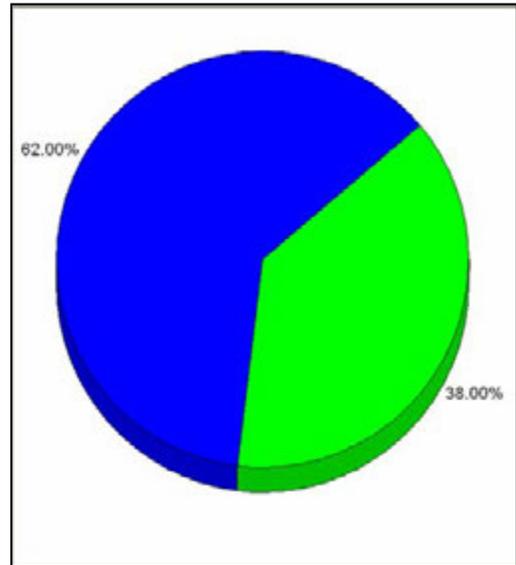
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Appendix B

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Transporter Client – Survey Results

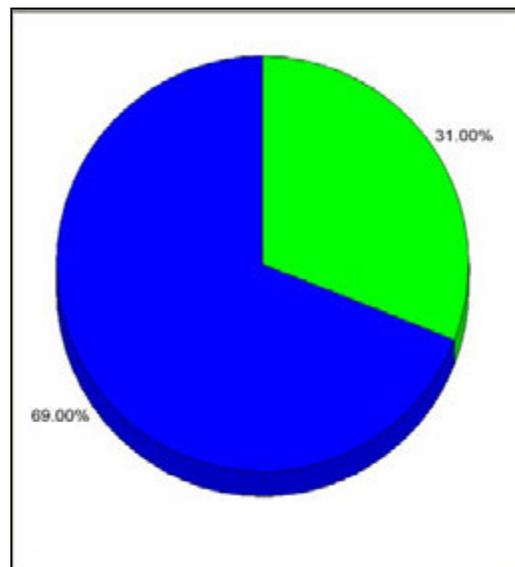
Question No. 1 – Did you have a written contract with the transporter?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	19	38.00%
■	No	31	62.00%



Question No. 2 – Transporters can also provide accommodations in the field to big game hunters. Such accommodations can involve things as a permanent lodge, house, or cabin owned by the transporter. Additionally, accommodations can be provided on a boat with permanent living quarters as long as the boat is navigating salt water. Were such accommodations part of the transportation services you received?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	15	31.00%
■	No	34	69.00%

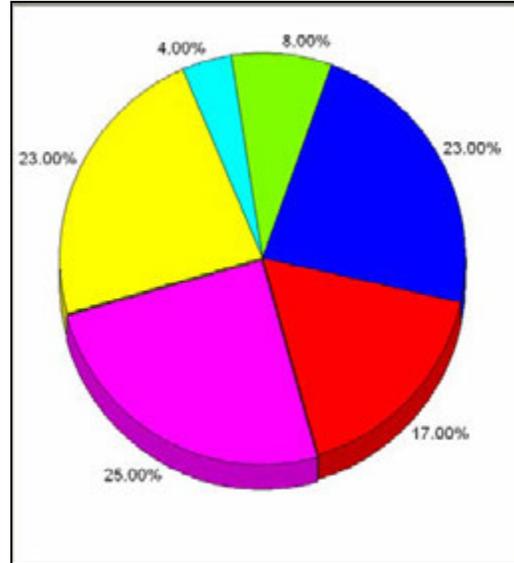


Appendix B

Department of Community and Economic Development  
 Transporter Client – Survey Results

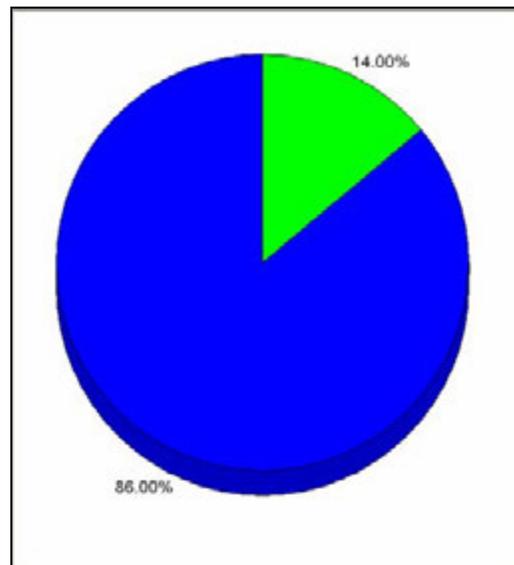
Question No. 3 – How much did you pay the transporter for all transportation, and if applicable, accommodations in the hunt area?

	Dollar Range	Number	Percent
■	Less than \$250	0	0.00%
■	\$250 - \$499	11	23.00%
■	\$500 - \$999	8	17.00%
■	\$1,000 - \$1,999	12	25.00%
■	\$2,000 - \$2,999	11	23.00%
■	\$3,000 - \$3,999	2	4.00%
■	Do Not Know	4	8.00%



Question No. 4 – Was the provided transportation part of a hunt contract with a guide?.

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	7	14.00%
■	No	43	86.00%

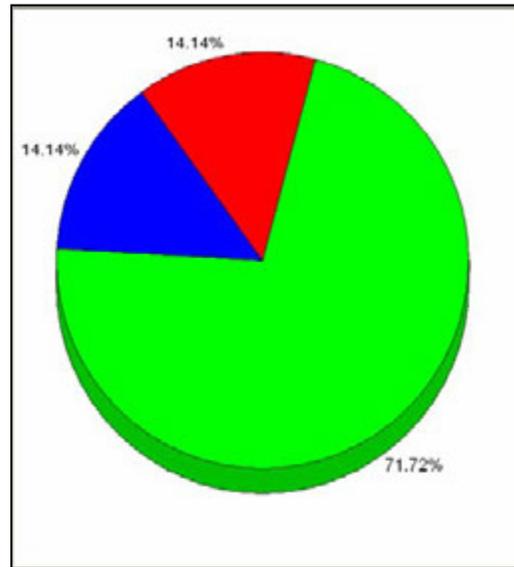


Appendix B

Department of Community and Economic Development  
 Transporter Client – Survey Results

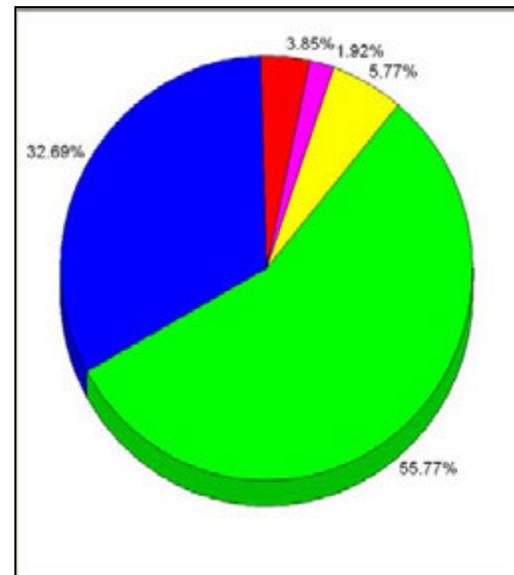
Question No. 5 – If transportation was part of the guided hunt contract, how much did you pay the guide for the hunt?

	Dollar Range	Number	Percent
■	Less than \$3,000	5	71.72%
■	\$3,000 - \$3,999	1	14.14%
■	\$5,000 - \$7,999	1	14.14%



Question No. 6 - What mode of transportation was used by the guide or transporter?

	Transportation	Number	Percent
■	Airplane	29	55.77%
■	Boat	17	32.69%
■	Horse	2	3.85%
■	All-Terrain Vehicle	1	1.92%
■	Other	3	5.77%



Appendix B

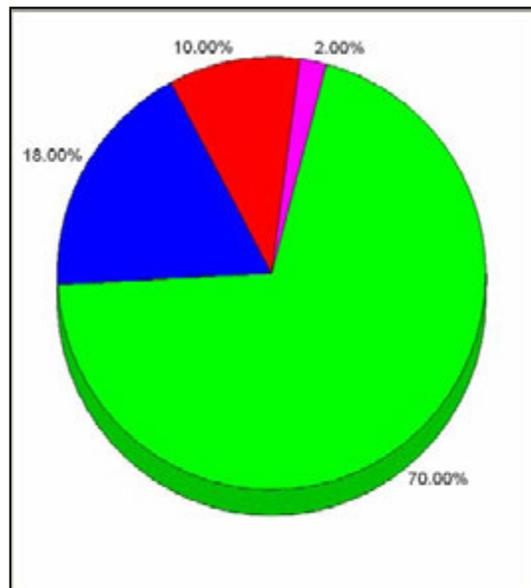
Department of Community and Economic Development  
Transporter Client – Survey Results

Question No. 7 - What was the ownership status of the land you hunted on?

Responses	Number	Percent
Do Not Know	18	31.03%
Other State Owned	15	25.86%
National Wildlife Refuge	9	15.52%
U.S. Forest Service	5	8.62%
Other	3	5.17%
National Park Service	2	3.45%
Other Federal Land	2	3.45%
Private	2	3.45%
Alaska Native Land	1	1.72%
State Park Service	1	1.72%

Question No. 8 – How would you rate your overall hunt experience?

Satisfaction	Number	Percent
Very Satisfied	35	70%
Somewhat Satisfied	9	18%
Not Very Satisfied	5	10%
Not At All Satisfied	1	2%



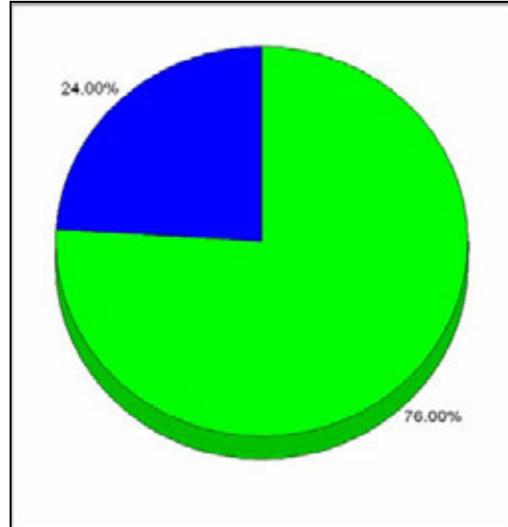
Some of the reasons identified for those who indicated less than satisfactory hunt or transporter experience were: lack of game animals, too many other hunters, bad weather, or wrong location.

Appendix B

Department of Community and Economic Development  
Transporter Client – Survey Results

Question No. 9 – Were you aware that transporters are licensed by the State of Alaska?

	Responses	Number	Percent
■	Yes	38	76.00%
■	No	12	24.00%



We asked the transporter clients to provide any other comments that they would like to share about their transporter or hunt experience. The following are some of the client comments:

- *“Transporters have no obligation to stay out of areas where someone is already camped out or they have already dropped off customers. Other outfitters actually landed on the place our tent was set up and dropped people off right in front of us. This was a super cub not a highway.”*
- *“All outfitters and transporters I speak to warn of other people getting dropped off on top of you. Is there anyway of designating areas, or having drop fees in areas? That would help deter these businesses from piling into one area. They would then be forced to find new areas. They could claim these as theirs.”*
- *“Was charged a 10% surcharge for my hunting license and moose tag in Iliamna because I chose to pay by credit card. I was under the impression that hunting licenses and tags was regulated by the State of Alaska and that surcharges were not allowed (even when paying by credit card) ...”*

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November 17, 2003

Ms. Pat Davidson, Legislative Auditor  
Division of Legislative Audit  
PO Box 113300  
Juneau, AK 99811-3300

RE: GUIDES AND TRANSPORTERS – PRELIMINARY AUDIT

Dear Ms. Davidson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your preliminary audit report on Guides and Transporters. We appreciate the thoroughness of your review and discussion of the various aspects related to this industry.

Although the Department does not support reestablishing a licensing board, we concur that statutes could be enhanced to provide more aggressive enforcement of unethical or unsafe practices. While we support authority for additional enforcement and for the public health, safety and consumer protection, we are concerned that new laws not be enacted which would be used to regulate the supply of practitioners for game management purposes or solely for the economic benefit of licensees.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on your review and findings. I will make my staff available to provide information and assist the committee as requested.

Sincerely,

Edgar Blatchford  
Commissioner

cc: Rick Urion, Director  
Division of Occupational Licensing

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# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

**FRANK H. MURKOWSKI**  
GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 25526  
JUNEAU, AK 99802-5526  
PHONE: (907) 465-4100  
FAX: (907) 465-2332

November 7, 2003

Pat Davidson, Legislative Auditor  
Legislative Budget and Audit Committee  
Division of Legislative Audit  
P.O. Box 113300  
Juneau, AK 99811-3300

Dear Mr. Davidson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the preliminary audit report on Occupational Licensing and Oversight of Alaska Big Game Guides and Transporters. Your report is accurate, thorough, and well-written. The Department of Fish and Game agrees with the recommendation that the legislature consider reestablishment of a guide/transporter services licensing board (Guide Board). Creation of a Guide Board with authority to regulate guide/transporter activities would improve wildlife management, benefit hunters, and bolster the economy of the state.

The Guide Board should have the authority to determine how many hunters a transporter can drop off in an area. The Guide Board and the Board of Game would work cooperatively to insure that Alaskan wildlife are harvested at the appropriate level to safeguard sustained yield, and that hunters can enjoy a high quality hunting experience without unnecessary crowding.

The Big Game Commercial Services Board, before it ceased to exist, did an excellent job of monitoring the ethical behavior and business practices of guides. A new Guide Board could fill that same role. It is important that hunters hiring the services of a guide have confidence that their guide meets high standards of conduct.

Each year, about 11,000 non-residents hunt in Alaska, and about two-thirds hire a guide. Their activities generate over \$100 million dollars to the Alaska economy, provide about 800 year-round jobs and many more seasonal jobs. I believe that establishing a Guide Board will help insure the long-term viability of the guiding industry in Alaska.

Sincerely yours,

Wayne Regelin  
Deputy Commissioner

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