

January 6, 2005

Governor Frank Murkowski  
State of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Murkowski:

As scientists and other wildlife professionals<sup>1</sup>, we are submitting this letter to strengthen the application of science-based management to sound policy decisions for the wildlife and citizens of Alaska.

For many decades, predator control in Alaska has been advocated as a means to reduce wolf and bear predations to increase densities of ungulates available for hunter harvest. More recently, seven new predator control programs were approved by the Alaska Board of Game, covering tens of thousands of square miles in interior and southcentral Alaska. Additional programs will be considered at the upcoming Board of Game meeting this March in Anchorage.

Five of the seven programs are currently being implemented. Up to 580 wolves in 43,000 square miles are expected to be killed by aerial or same-day airborne hunting in winter 2004-2005.

These new programs depart substantially from the approaches used previously in that:

- six of the seven areas had no planning team,
- study plans were not prepared, and
- no allowance was made for weak or missing data.

Furthermore, predator control in one area was approved by the Board of Game against the advice of biologists of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. These biologists indicated that they lacked key data necessary to justify the predator control program.

The Board of Game's recent approval of programs to reduce bear and wolf numbers to increase ungulate numbers is a step backward from earlier programs that incorporated most of the National Resource Council's major recommendations for using biological

---

<sup>1</sup> This letter represents viewpoints of the individuals listed below. Institutional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only, and do not in any way constitute an endorsement of this letter, nor does this letter necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the affiliated organizations.

standards and guidelines to monitor effectiveness of predator control programs. Consequently, the control programs as proposed will provide unexplainable or unclear results at best, wasted effort and failed response on the part of ungulate populations at worst.

Alaska's intensive management statute is a major barrier to implementation of the recommendations of the National Resource Council. Efforts to chase unattainable population and harvest objectives with poorly designed predator control programs may put at risk the long-term sustainability of ungulates, protection of habitat integrity, and the viability of predator populations.

Therefore, we strongly urge the state of Alaska to return to sound experimental design and monitoring so that results of any predator control programs can provide reliable data for policy and management decisions. Key standards that need to be employed include:

- Implementation of predator control only within an adaptive management framework,
- Monitor predator reductions with protocols having proper magnitude, duration, and geographic extent to demonstrate clear and obvious outcomes,
- Avoid implementing programs that have low probability of success,
- Avoid using artificially-inflated historical peaks for ungulate population levels as the management goals.

The track record of managing both eruptions and declines of key wildlife populations in Alaska is weak. Without appropriate safeguards to the design of predator control programs, we are concerned that the negative, long-term consequences may well outweigh any short-term increases in ungulate numbers that might be achieved.

Sincerely,

1. Victor Van Ballenberghe, Ph.D.  
Retired, U.S. Forest Service  
Anchorage, Alaska

2. David Klein, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus  
Institute of Arctic Biology  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska

3. J. Christopher Haney, Ph.D.  
Conservation Scientist  
Conservation Policy Program  
Defenders of Wildlife  
Washington, DC

4. John W. Schoen, Ph.D.  
Senior Scientist  
Audubon Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska

5. Stanley E. Senner, M.S.  
Executive Director  
Audubon Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska
6. Sterling Miller, Ph.D.  
Senior Wildlife Biologist  
National Wildlife Federation  
Missoula, Montana
7. Douglas B. Inkley, Ph.D.  
Senior Science Advisor  
National Wildlife Federation  
Reston, Virginia
8. Brian Miller  
Coordinator of Conservation Biology  
Denver Zoological Foundation  
Denver, Colorado
9. Fred Bunnell, Ph.D., RPBio  
Professor, Faculty of Forestry  
University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, British Columbia
10. Charles T. Robbins  
Professor, Wildlife Biology  
Washington State University  
Pullman, Washington
11. Richard P. Reading, Ph.D.  
Director of Conservation Biology  
Denver Zoological Foundation  
Denver, Colorado
12. Reed F. Noss, Ph.D.  
Davis-Shine Professor of Conservation  
Biology  
University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida
13. Alice Chung-MacCoubrey, PhD  
Research Wildlife Biologist  
Albuquerque, New Mexico
14. June M. Galloway  
Wildlife Biologist  
USDA Forest Service  
Albuquerque, New Mexico
15. Barry Noon, Ph.D.  
Professor, Dept. of Fishery & Wildlife  
Biology  
Colorado State University  
Ft. Collins, Colorado
16. H. Ronald Pulliam, Ph.D.  
Regent's Professor  
Institute of Ecology  
The University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia
17. Frederick C. Dean  
Professor Emeritus, Wildlife Mgmt.  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska
18. Barrie K. Gilbert, Ph.D.  
Emeritus Faculty  
Dept. of Forestry Range & Wildlife  
Sciences  
Utah State University  
Logan, Utah
19. Ruth Schaefer, Sc.M.  
Senior Ecologist  
King County Department of Natural  
Resources  
Seattle, Washington
20. Steve Sheffield, Ph.D.  
Affiliate Professor  
Dept. of Environmental Science &  
Policy  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, Virginia

21. Frances C. James, Ph.D.  
Department of Biological Science  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida 32306
22. Stephen C. Trombulak, Ph.D.  
Professor of Biology and Environmental  
Studies  
Middlebury College  
Middlebury, Vermont
23. Jack Lentfer  
Biologist – Retired  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Homer, Alaska
24. Len H. Carpenter  
SW Field Representative  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Fort Collins, Colorado
25. Amit Saxena, M.Sc., PBIol (AB) /  
RPBio (BC) / CWB (US)  
Senior Wildlife Ecologist / Wildlife  
Division Manager  
AXYS Environmental Consulting Ltd.  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
26. Lois F. Alexander, Ph.D.  
Postdoctoral Scholar  
Dept. of Biological Science  
University of Las Vegas  
Las Vegas, Nevada
27. Darren Newman  
Wildlife Biologist  
North Fork, California
28. Tom Manning  
Senior Faculty Research Assistant  
Department of Forest Science  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, Oregon
29. Lui Marinelli, PhD  
Department of Renewable  
Resources  
Selkirk College  
Castlegar, British Columbia
30. Brad Bergstrom, Ph.D.  
Dept. of Biology  
Valdosta State University  
Valdosta, Georgia
31. Ken Macquisten D.V.M.  
Managing Director / Veterinarian  
Grouse Mountain Refuge for  
Endangered Wildlife  
North Vancouver, British Columbia
32. Jeffrey B. Stetz  
Wildlife Biologist  
University of Montana  
West Glacier, Montana
33. Gary W. Roemer, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Fishery and Wildlife  
Sciences  
New Mexico State University  
Las Cruces, New Mexico
34. Patrick Magee  
Thornton Chair  
Department of Natural and  
Environmental Sciences  
Western State College  
Gunnison, Colorado
35. Sergio Xavier Vasquez  
Department of Zoology  
University of Oklahoma  
Norman, Oklahoma

36. Jennifer Sands  
M.S. Biology  
Boulder, Colorado
37. Sam Zeveloff, Ph.D.  
Chair, Department of Zoology  
Weber State University  
Ogden, Utah
38. Robert Robbins, Ph.D.  
African Wild Dog Conservancy  
Tucson, Arizona
39. Kim McCreery, Ph.D.  
African Wild Dog Conservancy  
Tucson, Arizona
40. MSc Dorota Dudek  
Centre for Ecological Research  
Polish Academy of Sciences  
Łomianki, Poland
41. Elmer J. Finck  
Professor and Chair  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Fort Hays State University  
Hays, Kansas
42. Derek Potter, M.Sc.  
Field Research Biologist  
Wildlife Research & Dev. Section  
ON Ministry of Natural Resources  
Peterborough, Ontario
43. Larisa Harding  
Wildlife/Carnivore Biologist  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico
44. Vicki Jackson, Ph.D.  
Central Missouri State University  
Dept. Biology and Earth Science  
Warrensburg, Missouri
45. Werner T. Flueck, Ph.D.  
TWS Certified Wildlife Biologist  
National Research Council of  
Argentina  
Bariloche - Argentina
46. David R. Parsons  
Wildlife Biologist  
Science Fellow and Vice Chairman  
The Rewilding Institute  
Albuquerque, New Mexico
47. Jack E. Williams  
Chief Scientist  
Trout Unlimited  
Ashland, Oregon
48. Virginia Hayssen  
Professor, Department of Biological  
Sciences  
Smith College  
Northampton, Massachusetts
49. Wayne E. Melquist, Ph.D.  
Research Associate Professor  
University of Idaho  
Moscow, Idaho
50. Susan E. Townsend, Ph.D.  
Wildlife Ecologist/Environmental  
Consultant  
Oakland, California
51. Terry D. DeBruyn, Ph.D.  
Regional Wildlife Biologist  
National Park Service, Alaska  
Region  
Anchorage, Alaska
52. Robin Butler  
Natural Sciences Laboratory  
Louisiana State University at  
Alexandria  
Alexandria, Louisiana

53. Eric A. Rickart, Ph.D.  
Curator of Vertebrates  
Utah Museum of Natural History  
University of Utah  
Salt Lake City, Utah
54. Jo Anne Smith-Flueck, Ph.D. M.Sc.  
DeerLab  
Bariloche Argentina
55. David Byman, Ph.D.  
Asst. Prof. Biology  
Penn State University  
Worthington Scranton Campus  
Dunmore, Pennsylvania
56. J. R. Choate  
Director  
Sternberg Museum of Natural History  
Fort Hays State University  
Hays, Kansas
57. Adam Switalski, M.S.  
Staff Scientist  
Wildlands CPR  
Missoula, Montana
58. Carl W. Dick  
Systematics and Evolution Program  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Texas Tech University  
Lubbock, Texas
59. Joe Roman, Ph.D  
PO Box 206  
Burlington, Vermont
60. Andrew Joachim, M.S.T.  
Mammal Ecologist  
Lake Placid, New York
61. Lynda Randa, M.S.  
Assistant Professor of Biology  
College of DuPage  
Division of Natural and Applied  
Sciences  
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 USA
62. Brooks Miner  
Research Scientist  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington
63. Gene R. Trapp, Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus  
Dept. Biological Sciences  
California State University  
Sacramento, California
64. Richard K. Nelson, Ph.D.  
Affiliate Faculty  
University of Alaska Southeast  
Sitka, Alaska
65. Jan Decher, Ph.D.  
Research Associate  
Department of Biology  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, Vermont
66. Glennis Kaufman, Ph.D.  
Research Assistant Professor  
Division of Biology  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas
67. Allison Butler, M.Sc.  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska
68. Ian van Tets, Ph.D.  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska

69. Jan O. Murie  
Professor Emeritus  
Dept. of Biological Sciences  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, Alberta
70. Chris C. Maguire  
Asst. Professor, Senior Research  
Department of Forest Science  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, Oregon
71. Frank von Hippel, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska
72. Lynn B. Martin II, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology and  
Neuroscience  
Ohio State University  
Columbus Ohio
73. Jesse Owens, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Biomedical Program  
University of Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska
74. Abel Bult-Ito, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor of Biology  
(Neuroscience)  
Institute of Arctic Biology  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska
75. Andy Kliskey, Ph.D  
Assistant Professor  
Biological Sciences & Environmental  
Studies, Resilience and Adaptive  
Management Group  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska
76. Judy Hoy  
Bitterroot Wildlife Rehabilitation  
Center  
Stevensville, Montana
77. Rolf O. Peterson, Ph.D.  
Professor of Wildlife Ecology  
Michigan Technological University  
Houghton, Michigan
78. Christopher Lowrey  
Wildlife Biologist  
USGS Las Vegas Field Station  
Henderson, Nevada
79. Gary Wockner, Ph.D.  
Natural Resource Ecology Lab  
Colorado State University  
Ft. Collins, Colorado
80. Jocelyn E. Krebs, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Dept. of Biological Sciences  
University of Alaska Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska
81. James G. Hallett, Ph.D.  
Associate Scientist  
School of Biological Sciences  
Washington State University  
Pullman, Washington
82. David Houle  
Associate Professor  
Dept. of Biological Science  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, Florida
83. Seth M. Wilson, Ph.D.  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
Yale School of Forestry &  
Environmental Studies  
Adjunct Asst. Professor  
The University of Montana  
Missoula, Montana

84. Robert P. Davison, Ph.D.  
Northwest Field Representative  
Wildlife Management Institute  
Corvallis, Oregon
85. Edward C. Murphy  
Professor of Zoology  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska
86. Richard Thorington, Ph.D. Division  
of Mammals  
National Museum of Natural History  
Smithsonian Institution  
Washington, DC
87. Richard Sweitzer, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Department of Biology  
University of North Dakota  
Grand Forks, North Dakota
88. James W. Demastes, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
University of Northern Iowa  
Cedar Falls, Iowa
89. Suzanne B. McLaren, Ph.D.  
Collection Manager  
Section of Mammals  
Carnegie Museum of Natural History  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
90. Brad R. Blood, Ph.D.  
Senior Environmental Scientist  
Psomas  
Costa Mesa, California
91. Maria Jerabek, Ph.D.  
Holzbachweg 2  
Elsbethen, Austria
92. A. Isabel Gonzalez-Martinez,  
Ph.D.  
Centre for Ecology, Evolution, and  
Conservation  
University of East Anglia  
Norwich, United Kingdom
93. Tracy A. Carter, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Biology  
Baylor University  
Waco, Texas
94. Geoffrey Gerstner, DDS, MS,  
Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Dept. of Biologic and Materials  
Sciences, Center for the Study of  
Complex Systems  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, Michigan
95. Carles Vila, Ph.D.  
Department of Evolutionary Biology  
Uppsala University  
Uppsala, Sweden
96. Wanda Gorsuch, B.Sc.  
Research Program Coordinator  
Delta Waterfowl Foundation  
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, Canada
97. William Hilton, Jr., Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont  
Natural History  
York, South Carolina
98. Julie Weston, Ph.D.  
Postdoctoral Researcher  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of South Carolina  
Columbia, SC

99. Molly Steinwald, M.S.  
Biology Instructor  
Ave Maria College  
Ypsilanti, MI

100. Paul Paquet, Ph.D.  
University of Calgary  
Faculty of Environmental Design  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Students, Assistants, Teachers and  
Ph.C's.

1. Sacha Vignieri  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

2. Julie Young  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Forest, Range, and  
Wildlife Sciences  
Utah State University  
Logan, Utah

3. Joshua R. Whorley  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

4. Maurine Gilmore  
Master's Candidate  
Zoology Department  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

5. Kendra Lyn Phelps  
Graduate Student  
Department of Zoology  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

6. Tessa B. Francis  
PhD Candidate  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

7. Cody Thompson  
Master of Science Candidate  
Department of Biological Sciences  
Fort Hays State University  
Hays, Kansas

8. Mundy Hackett  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Dept. Fisheries & Wildlife Sciences  
University of Missouri  
Columbia, Missouri

9. Christina Lynn Hannon  
M.S. Candidate  
D. B. Warnell School of Forest  
Resources  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia

10. Michael J. Cramer  
Graduate Assistant  
Department of Biological Sciences  
University of Cincinnati  
Cincinnati, Ohio

11. Brian C. Bartels  
Biology Teacher  
Goodland, Kansas

12. Laura Farrell  
Carnivore Biologist/PhD Candidate  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, Vermont

13. Jennifer Carr  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Northwestern University  
(Undergraduate at Univ. of Alaska  
Fairbanks).  
Lynn, Massachusetts

14. Bryan Kluever  
M.S. Candidate  
Department of Range and Forest  
Resources  
University of Arizona  
Tucson, Arizona

15. Karyn Rode  
Research Scientist  
Washington State University  
Pullman, Washington

16. Matt A. Bahm  
Doctoral Research Assistant  
Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
Sciences  
South Dakota State University  
Brookings, South Dakota

17. Sara O'Brien, MS  
Graduate Student  
University of Washington  
Dept. of Biology  
Seattle, Washington

18. Frances Bonier  
Ph.D. candidate  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

19. Richard S. Fritsky  
Graduate Research Assistant  
Cooperative Fish & Wildlife  
Research Unit  
Penn State University  
University Park, Pennsylvania

20. Amanda Rychel  
Ph.D. candidate  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

21. Daniel Froehlich  
Graduate Student  
Burke Museum  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

22. Patricia Townsend  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Department of Biology  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

23. Carson Brown  
Research Associate  
Department of Biology  
University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, NM

cc: Alaska Board of Game  
Alaska State Legislature