

## **SB 303 and HB 442**

### **Sponsor Statement**

**“An Act relating to the Big Game Commercial Services Board and to the regulation of big game hunting services; and providing for an effective date.”**

This bill would re-establish the Big Game Commercial Services Board to oversee an important industry that exists largely on the basis of a healthy wildlife population. The board was allowed to sunset a decade ago, and in the following years, professional hunters, wildlife biologists, public and private land managers and the hunting public themselves have discovered the problems associated with a decentralized, uncoordinated system of licensing and regulating guides and transporters.

[An audit](#) commissioned by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Alaska Legislature and released in December, 2003, recommends the board be re-established. Auditors concluded after extensive interviews with affected agencies, land owners and hunters that wildlife populations would benefit from more coordinated enforcement of existing laws, and that consumer protection and hunter-client safety could be improved. The Alaska Board of Game has also asked repeatedly that a guide licensing board be re-established.

This bill would create a seven-member board within the Department of Community and Economic Development. Two members would represent active registered guides, one member would represent a licensed transporter, one member would be assigned by the Board of Game, two members would represent private landholders, and one member would represent the public. The bill also increases from \$1,000 to \$5,000 the maximum civil penalty for disciplinary purposes.