



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

## Department of Fish and Game

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
Headquarters Office

1255 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526  
Main: 907.465.4190  
Fax: 907.465.6142

October 9, 2020

Mr. Joseph W. Geldhof  
2 Marine Way, Ste. 207  
Juneau, Alaska 999801

Dear Mr. Geldhof:

Thank you for conveying Mr. Bennett's and Alaska Wildlife Alliance's continued interest in management of wolves in Game Management Unit 2 (Unit 2). Your letter of September 18, 2020 asked that the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) make the fall 2019 Unit 2 wolf population estimate public by October 14, 2020 and notes that you believe it is very unlikely that the current population can support any harvest. I understand your perspective but would like to build on the information in my reply of September 8<sup>th</sup> by explaining more about ADF&G's mandate and the management setting in Unit 2.

It may interest you to learn that the Alaska Constitution mandates ADF&G to manage fish and game populations for sustained yield, or levels of harvest that do not compromise future harvest potential. We take that mandate seriously and will manage the Unit 2 wolf population accordingly. Within that context in January 2019 the Board of Game established a fall population objective of 150-200 wolves for Unit 2 and endorsed our management plan. ADF&G will continue to gather information on the long-term sustainability of the Unit 2 wolf population. If we learn that current management may not be sustainable, we will alter management and seek appropriate regulatory changes from the Board of Game.

It is also important to consider that most people who harvest wolves in Unit 2 are also federally qualified subsistence users eligible to harvest fish and game under state or federal subsistence regulations. Therefore, it is imperative that state and federal managers coordinate when developing annual harvest management strategies. It has been the practice of both agencies to formulate a harvest management strategy and announce that strategy through a joint press release prior to trapping season. I anticipate we will issue that joint press release in mid-October but cannot predict the date.

I am confident that ADF&G and U.S. Forest Service managers will select a sustainable fall 2020 harvest management strategy consistent with our constitutional mandate and management plan, and I will personally review that strategy before it is made public. Because a short or closed season are among the options in the management plan, I do not anticipate a need to make an emergency finding. As noted in my previous letter, if two members of the Board of Game

disagree, they have the option of calling a special meeting. To maintain that as a viable option, I will ensure the fall 2020 harvest strategy including the fall 2019 population estimate is made public without delay.

Thanks again for you for your interest in Unit 2 wolves and for taking the time to express your concerns.

Sincerely,



Doug Vincent-Lang  
Commissioner

cc: Joel Bennett, Alaska Wildlife Alliance (Through his Attorney Mr. Geldhof)  
Eddie Grasser, Director, Division of Wildlife Conservation  
Kristy Tibbles, Executive Director, Boards Support  
Stosh Hoffman, Vice Chair, Alaska Board of Game  
Larry Van Daele, Alaska Board of Game  
Jerry Burnett, Alaska Board of Game  
Orville Huntington, Alaska Board of Game  
Al Barrette, Alaska Board of Game  
Jake Fletcher, Alaska Board of Game  
Lynn Keogh, Alaska Board of Game