

Lowell Thomas, Jr.
Peg Tileston
Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Public Interest Research Group
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Alaska Wildland Adventures
Defenders of Wildlife
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
National Parks Conservation Association
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
The Ascending Path
Wilderness Birding Adventures

October 3, 2007

Dear Governor Palin:

On behalf of our thousands of members and supporters in Alaska, the undersigned groups and individuals urge you to reconsider the recent authorization of \$400,000 to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to develop an “education campaign” regarding the state’s predator control programs.

Spending public funds on an “education campaign” to justify the state’s predator control programs would be a gross misuse of public resources for several reasons:

- The aerial gunning issue is scheduled for a vote next year. Although disguised as an education campaign, in reality, this funding could improperly influence the outcome of the pending ballot measure and contribute to a perception that the state is using public funds to influence an election. The government should leave the development of campaign materials to private individuals and organizations.
- Utilizing \$400,000 to convince Alaskans of the importance of a program that has spent more than \$2 million dollars over the last two years to kill a few hundred wolves primarily for the benefit of urban hunters is fiscally irresponsible. When first proposed, it was said that these programs would only be implemented for a few years. The programs are now entering their fifth year and no end is in sight. It is inappropriate for the state to continue to fund such expensive programs that yield such little benefit for so few.
- Support of these programs demonstrates a willingness to ignore the wishes of your constituents who have clearly expressed not once but twice through the ballot measure process their opposition to the use of aircraft by private citizens to kill wolves. Certainly, these two votes have clarified Alaskans’ opposition to this type of predator control. Funding this “education campaign” in clear opposition to the will of Alaskans dismisses the ballot measure process as a legitimate part of the legislative process and undermines and jeopardizes the integrity of future ballot measures.

For these reasons, we urge you to put an immediate stop to this inappropriate use of public money. Please respect the views of Alaskans expressed through the ballot measure process and allow the vote on the 2008 ballot measure to be free of political interference.

Sincerely,

John Toppenberg, Executive Director
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
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(907) 277-9819

On behalf of the following cosigners:

Lowell Thomas, Jr., Former Lieutenant Governor, State of Alaska
Peg Tileston, Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient, Alaska Conservation Foundation
Randy Virgin, Executive Director, Alaska Center for the Environment
Steve Cleary, Executive Director, Alaska Public Interest Research Group
Kirk Hoessle, President, Alaska Wildland Adventures
Tom Banks, Alaska Representative, Defenders of Wildlife
Roberta Highland, President, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
Jim Stratton, Alaska Regional Director, National Parks Conservation Association
David van den Berg, Executive Director, Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Matt Szundy, Owner/Mountain Guide, The Ascending Path
Lisa Moorehead and Bob Dittrick, Owners, Wilderness Birding Adventures