

steven opat

DEC,

My name is Steve Opat from Fairbanks, AK. I am an avid big game hunter in Alaska. As well, I am an assistant guide and am starting a business as a hunt consultant so that I can help people from all over the world find their ideal outdoor experience in the untarnished wilds of Alaska. To continue to offer that place of unfettered grandeur, Alaskans must strive to protect vulnerable lands and animals from human devastation. I am well-educated on what M. Ovi has done to bighorn sheep populations in North America. I am writing to voice my concerns for wildsheep, goats and muskoxen in Alaska. I am in support of this regulation to have all domestic sheep and goats - of all ages - be tested for M.Ovi and prior to being allowed into the state. Through my involvement with conservation organizations, I have been educated on the importance of reputable testing. I echo the Wild Sheep Foundations sentiment that testing should be completed through AAVLD accredited testing laboratories.

Perhaps most importantly, I request that we add M.Ovi to the Reportable Disease list and require same-day reporting.

I see these steps as an opportunity for both the domestic growers and wildlife conservationists. With collaboration to incorporate these measures, Alaska could promote that it has a thriving WILD sheep herd and rare disease-free DOMESTIC herd.

Thank you for hearing my concerns and ideas.

Cordially,

Steven J Opat
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