

The Alaska Outdoor Council represents over 10,000 Alaskans with varied outdoor interests who are all willing to speak as one voice when it comes to;

“perpetuating the natural resource base upon which member groups activities depend.”

**Alaska Outdoor Council Bylaws, Article 3. Purpose.**

A number of the Alaska Outdoor Council member clubs, as well as individual members, depend on healthy Dall Sheep populations in Alaska for a multitude of reasons. The current high value of Alaska’s wildlife to its citizens and the state’s economy is well researched by both state and federal land managers. Scientific data suggest that *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (M.ovi) may be lethal to Alaska’s Dall sheep populations. Scientific data also suggests that domestic sheep and goats may be carriers of pathogens lethal to populations of Dall Sheep in Alaska. Based on that information the Alaska Outdoor Council supports the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) proposed changes to Title 18, Chapter 36 of the Alaska Administrative Code that would allow DEC to better prevent a harmful pathogen from infecting Alaska’s wildlife transferred from domestic sheep and goat stocks imported into the state.

**Article 8, Natural Resources. Section 3. Common Use** of the Alaska State Constitution legitimizes the Alaska Outdoor Council interest in making sure the state has the tools to protect our common use property, Dall sheep, from being negatively impacted by a invasive pathogen that may come into Alaska via domestic sheep and goat imports.

The Alaska Outdoor Council would recommend that 18 AAC 36.125(a)(5) and 18 AAC 36.135(a)(6) both take out the exemption for under two months of age. If there was ever a time that the cautionary principles should prevail it would be during a time of global pandemic. No exemption at this early time, before a problem exists, makes more sense than minimizing Alaska’s Dall sheep exposure of any foreign pathogens. Exemptions and repealing existing DEC regulations can easily be enacted when new Scientific data verifies there is no risk from the importation of goats and sheep that are carriers of the M.ovi. pathogen

Alaskans all depend on the attention that the staff in DEC’s Division of Environmental Health gives to safeguarding our health. Alaska Outdoor Council membership appreciate that. Concerns of the spread of a virus from domestic livestock to wild populations of game in Alaska most likely is of concern to only a few Alaskans. The Alaska Outdoor Council thanks Director Christina Carpenter and Environmental Health staff for working with livestock and wildlife interests toward what will be safeguards in regulations for Alaska’s valuable wildlife resources from pathogens like M. Ovi.