



Mr. William R. Tilton
President
Alaska Falconers Association
P.O. Box 55390
North Pole, AK 99705-0390

Dear Mr. Tilton:

On behalf of the American Falconry Conservancy (AFC), I wanted to first thank the Alaska Falconers Association for taking part in the public comment opportunities provided by the Alaska Board of Game in regards to the proposed regulation amendments to allow non-resident raptor take in Alaska. These public comment opportunities are a crucial component of our state and national traditions of managing wildlife. They provide the opportunity for every citizen to provide sound biological input and proposals for future legislative action based on that sound biological input to their state wildlife administrative agencies. Scientifically supported facts are the foundation of great wildlife management systems. Anything other than sound science is never in the best interest of the people or the wildlife. That being said, there are times when the public comment opportunities are abused by individuals in an attempt to sway the legislative process to support their position by providing false and misleading information to a wildlife administrative agency. Your letter to the Alaska Board of Game made a specific false factual claim which AFC feels the need to quickly address.

Although AFC disagrees with several facts, conclusions, and opinions expressed in the AFA cover letter and attached PC-201, we wish to address only one issue at this time. Your letter claims that one of AFC's "founding members was once caught selling gyrfalcons taken illegally and smuggled from Alaska, which has been frequently mentioned at Board hearings over the years." That claim is blatantly false and defamatory. None of AFC's founding members, or current governing members, have ever illegally smuggled gyrfalcons or sold gyrfalcons illegal taken from Alaska. In most jurisdictions, making a false claim accusing another of a crime or immoral act is libel per se. Your letter does not name the alleged individual, or the date that this illegal act allegedly occurred, but rather generally accuses the AFC founding members. AFC's reputation as an honest, law abiding organization, whose purposes and means are legitimate is well established. Your false claim is extremely damaging to our business reputation and also the individual reputations of our founding members.

You may not have realized this but your outlandish claim was not merely published for the benefit of the ABoG. Your letter and comment are now part of the permanent public record and can be viewed, and then circulated, by anyone. Additionally, your comment that this unlawful act "has frequently been mentioned at Board hearings over the years" leads us to believe that you must be referencing some event which allegedly happened many, many years ago. Such a dated event would have no bearing on the current proposed legislation. Your comment was made for the simple purpose of maliciously casting our organization as one run by criminals whose opinions and recommendations should be dismissed as such. That is outside the legitimate purposes of a public comment forum.

We are requesting that you quickly right your wrong in this matter. We are requesting that you write a detailed letter of correction regarding this claim and submit it to the ABoG. It also seems appropriate that you write a letter of apology for your misstatement and forward this to AFC. We intend to forward your letter to the concerned individuals who have contacted our organization, and also those who may in the future contact our organization, after reading your false statements to the ABoG.

We do appreciate your prompt attention and corrective actions. If you take those steps, within the next 30 days, we will consider this matter resolved.

Sincerely,

Bill Meeker
President, AFC