

## E-MAIL FROM GLENN HELGELAND, DEER & TURKEY EXPO PRODUCER

SENATE FISH AND GAME

EXHIBIT NO. 3

DATE: 1/16/05

BILL NO. SB 146

On Tuesday, October 5, 2004, at 09:32 AM, Glenn Helgeland wrote:

Bill...

None of the states in which I produce shows have a law against trophy contests. In fact, there are Big Buck contests all over each state every year during deer hunting. Taverns sponsor them. Sporting goods stores sponsor them. Chambers of Commerce sponsor them.

None of them — my shows or the other contests — have any influence whatsoever on poaching or harm wildlife populations in any way.

In fact, it has been my experience that cheaters get sniffed out quickly — right at the contest or shortly thereafter. The only cheating I am aware of is one instance of a purchased roadkill entered as a gun kill and an illegal out-of-state kill entered as an In-state bow kill (a double cheat). This is in 21 years of producing shows.

Have there been others? Of course, but damned few. Otherwise, I'd have heard about them. We draw people from all over, so every entry will have other people from the entry's home area viewing the trophy entry. If anything's fishy, they'll let someone know.

We've had a handful of instances where game wardens were able to pin a rap on a guy who entered an illegal deer, and who were thankful the guy entered the deer because they hadn't been able to nail the perp any other way. Also, of course, when wardens are sniffing around the contest, trying to get the goods on a suspect, the word gets around fast and has a sobering effect on things. So ... in such instances, our trophy contest has proven to be a help, not a hindrance. You know that old statement: Nothing sterilizes like bright sunlight.

Besides, any idiot willing to risk his license, firearm, etc. for a trophy costing about \$9 ought to get his ass nailed.

One thing that helps keep us clean is that we make it extremely clear that the ONLY prizes are participation ribbons (purple, so everyone feels they've got a winner) and award trophies. We specifically state there are zero cash or merchandise prizes. I think this has a strong positive influence on keeping the contest clean.

Entry totals in our trophy contests vary year to year, governed hugely by the weather (and thus the kill total) in the previous season, and the loosening or tightening of kill regulations, increase or decrease in the DNR's desired kill totals (to bring herds in line with over-wintering population goals), and related items. For instance, Illinois' contest generally had 450-470 entries of really big whitetail racks. (Honest to God, you wouldn't believe the size of those racks until you see them.) In 2003, Illinois' DNR liberalized the season in a first step to reduce the herd size. Entry total at our 2004 Illinois trophy contest was 633 of the biggest racks I've ever seen. Even the P&Y and B&C measurers were walking around looking at the display. Guys in the know in Illinois predict another monster year for our 2005 show and then a big fall-off as the herd numbers are brought down.

I've also found that a lot of the trophy contest entrants are attending the show for the first time. If they were doing dirty stuff, they'd have been there multiple times, probably with an entry year after year, or close to that. I've seen that happen only once, and enough people looked cross-eyed at the guy that he quit. The DNR couldn't pin anything on him; everyone figured he was buying antlers and not killing them himself. >

I hope this commentary helps you. It covers all aspects of a trophy event. Tell anyone who has further questions to call me — 262-242-3990 (Central Time).