

PROPOSAL 3– 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and electronic scopes in hunts for big game restricted to archery only, as follows:

5 AAC 92.085(10) with the following archery equipment or devices in a restricted weapons hunt that authorizes taking by bow and arrow:

(A) any type of electronic device, or light attached to the bow, arrow, or arrowhead, except a non-illuminating camera or a lighted nock on the end of an arrow, or a scope or electronic sight that does not project light externally;

[(B) SCOPES OR OTHER DEVICES ATTACHED TO THE BOW OR ARROW FOR OPTICAL ENHANCEMENT;]

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

WHAT WOULD THE PROPOSAL DO? The proposal will allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and electronic scopes to be used in big game hunts limited to take by bow and arrow only.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT REGULATIONS?

5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. The following methods and means of taking big game are prohibited in addition to the prohibitions in 5 AAC 92.080:

...

(10) with the following archery equipment or devices in a restricted weapons hunt that authorizes taking by bow and arrow:

(A) any type of electronic device, or light attached to the bow, arrow, or arrowhead, except a non-illuminating camera or a lighted nock on the end of an arrow, or a scope or electronic sight that does not project light externally;

(B) scopes or other devices attached to the bow or arrow for optical enhancement;

WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT IF THE PROPOSAL WERE ADOPTED? If the proposal were adopted hunters participating in big game hunts restricted to archery only will be able to use visual enhancements to assist in the taking of game. Success rates in archery only hunts are typically low, and the department has no way to estimate the increase, if any, in harvest if this proposal were adopted.

BACKGROUND: The use of electronic range finders while hunting big game in Alaska is legal. Range finders assist bowhunters with judging distance, especially in mountainous or tundra terrain, which can aid in better shot placement to better ensure efficient lethal kills.

The current regulations for items attached to bows and arrows in restricted weapons hunts are designed for less technically advanced equipment and that optical enhancement is not needed for shots taken with a bow due to the shorter distance compared to that for a rifle. Technology has advanced and many archers in other states, and hunts in Alaska not restricted to archery only, use verifiers and clarifiers when archery target shooting. There are now electronic bow sights with built-in laser range finders on the market, and these sights do not project light externally. The LED pins automatically adjust brightness to conditions and the laser range finder calculates which pin to use for the shot. Other states' regulations are found in Table 3.1.

Verifiers are an optical enhancement that allow archers who have trouble seeing things at close distances to see the sight pins on their bows more clearly. They are the equivalent of reading glasses for peep sites. In contrast, scopes on bows are an optical enhancement that magnifies the target the same way scopes do on rifles. Additionally, clarifiers can also be used in conjunction with a scope to make the image of the target clearer, the same way the focus of binoculars and rifle scopes are adjusted to see a clearer image.

Table 3.1 Archery equipment regulations for select states.

Idaho	<p>In any hunt, including general any-weapon seasons and short-range hunts, it is unlawful to pursue or kill big game animals: -With any electronic or tritium-powered device attached to or incorporated into an arrow, bolt, crossbow, or bow; except lighted nocks are allowed. Hunters with a physical or visual disability may apply for a Reasonable Modification Permit to use a crossbow or a device that holds a bow at partial or full draw and/or use a scope or sight magnification (including battery-powered or tritium-lighted reticles) that may include magnification up to 4x power.</p> <p>During an archery-only season, it is illegal for hunters to use:- Any bow equipped with magnifying sights except verifiers. (Verifier is defined as a small lens that is inserted into a peep sight to help archers and shooters focus on the sight.) Hunters with a visual disability may apply for a Reasonable Modification Permit to use up to a 4x scope containing battery-powered or tritium-lighted reticles.</p>
Montana	<p>The following are not considered legal archery equipment during the archery-only season:</p> <p>-electronic or battery-powered devices attached to a hunting bow or arrow that aides in the taking or locating of any game animal or game bird.</p>

	-A bow sight or arrow that uses artificial light, luminous chemicals such as tritium, or electronics. Exception: an arrow may have a lighted nock.
Oregon	It is unlawful to hunt game mammals with: -Any electronic device attached to bow or arrow except lighted arrow nocks that have no function other than to increase visibility of the arrow, and cameras that have no other function (such as range finding) than recording images are allowed.
Washington	Rules pertaining to all archery hunting seasons: -It is unlawful to have any electrical equipment or electric device(s) except for illuminated nocks attached to the bow or arrow while hunting. -It is unlawful to hunt wildlife with any bow equipped with a scope. A verifier peep sight that magnifies the sights is not considered a scope and is lawful.
Wyoming	Magnifying sights, holographic sights and range finding sights attached to legal archery equipment are permissible to use while archery hunting any big or trophy game animal.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The department submitted and SUPPORTS this proposal to allow the use of verifiers, clarifiers, and electronic scopes on archery equipment used in archery restricted hunts, and is NEUTRAL on the methods and means aspect of this proposal.

COST ANALYSIS: Adoption of this proposal would not result in additional costs for the department.
