



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dec 5, 2022

**STATEMENT REGARDING 2023 MUSHER SIGN UPS**

Thirty-four mushers have signed up for the 2023 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, which is the number of mushers who signed up in the race’s inaugural year, 1973. The Iditarod Trail Committee believes the low number of mushers is due to a confluence of factors. There are a number of mushers who have simply taken the year off, whether it be to spend more time with their families, to take a break, considering retirement or have retired from long distance racing and coming out of the Covid-challenged years has also been an obstacle for many. However, the #1 factor appears to be the economy; Dog mushing is an expensive sport and way of life and the extreme inflation in the current economy has only magnified the expenses, specifically in dog food and fuel for summer training.

The Iditarod Trail Committee is thrilled for the upcoming 2023 Race and to welcome back its veteran mushers as well as its rookie mushers, whom of which just met for the 2023 Rookie Meeting this past Saturday, December 3, 2022. Happy trails to all of our mushers and teams and we are excited for Iditarod 2023.

-Iditarod Trail Committee



**2023 Iditarod Rookies**

Photo: Iditarod Trail Committee

Top row, left to right: Bridgett Watkins , Eddie Burke Jr., Bailey Vitello, Gerhardt Thiar, Gregg Vitello

Bottom row, left to right: Hunter Keefe, KatiJo Deeter, Jed Stephensen, Jennifer LaBar