



## NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.

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May 18, 2016

Chairman Mario M. Scavello  
Senate Game and Fisheries Committee  
State House Room 8E-A East Wing  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2005

Position: **Support**

### **Re: Support Expansion of Sunday Hunting**

Dear Chair Scavello and Members of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee:

The National Shooting Sports Foundation ("NSSF") is the trade association for America's firearms, ammunition, hunting and recreational shooting sports industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. NSSF has a membership of more than 13,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, and sportsmen's organizations. Our manufacturer members make the firearms used by law-abiding Pennsylvania sportsmen, the U.S. military and law enforcement agencies throughout the state. This is to notify you of our strong support to bring an expansion to Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania.

As members of the Sunday Hunting Coalition, achieving success most recently in North Carolina and Virginia, we are writing to express our strong support for repealing Pennsylvania's ban on Sunday hunting. Our diverse coalition stands with you, united by a shared goal of removing this antiquated prohibition as a top priority in Pennsylvania.

The organizations who are members of the Sunday Hunting Coalition represent hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvania sportsmen, hunters and gun owners – and tens of millions nationwide – who are committed to increasing the access and opportunity to hunt in Pennsylvania so that the heritage and tradition of hunting can be passed on and enjoyed by future generations. This important piece of legislation will allow sportsmen the opportunities to further experience the great outdoors. NSSF recognizes that many social, economic and wildlife conservation benefits will result from a successful repeal of the Sunday hunting ban. For example:

For 20 years, interest in hunting has been declining in Pennsylvania. The number of hunting licenses issued annually has decreased over 15% compared to 1994. The number of licenses decreased from 1,149,426 in 1994 to 969,633 in 2013, or -15.6%.

The future of hunting in Pennsylvania is in question. It is simply imperative that action be taken to protect and preserve hunting in the Commonwealth. Hunting is under attack in Pennsylvania and elsewhere by animal rights groups, like the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), whose spokesperson said the decline in hunting in Pennsylvania is "a step in the right direction..."

Sunday hunting is an excellent vehicle to recruit new hunter-conservationists. Hunting, fishing and other forms of outdoor recreation have proven physical, psychological and educational benefits for our nation's young people. Despite these benefits, our country has experienced declining participation in hunting and other forms of wildlife dependent recreation over the past two decades.

Due to the greater prevalence of academic, athletic and other competing activities that take place on Saturday, it is likely that allowing Sunday hunting more than doubles the number of days students can hunt. It also essentially doubles the value of the hunting license. Studies indicate that allowing hunters to take to the field on Sundays will increase participation by about 25% -- meaning more hunting license sales (and associated revenue) and more Pittman Robertson funds for Pennsylvania.

Hunting on Sunday is a valuable aid to the management of wildlife exceeding their carrying capacity and wildlife conflicts such as collisions with vehicles. In addition, Sunday hunting has no detrimental effect on wildlife populations. Finally, state wildlife agencies and commissions are better positioned than legislators to set hunting seasons and dates. Also let's not forget the constant complaints voiced by the Farm Bureau blaming deer for crop degradation.

Hunting and associated industries represent the largest financial supporters of wildlife conservation throughout the United States, having contributed over \$10.3 billion to habitat conservation and wildlife management through Pittman Robertson excise tax payments since 1991. In addition to excise tax payments, hunting and fishing licenses constitute the second largest source of revenue for state fish and wildlife agencies. Excise tax contributions and license receipts will inevitably increase with the removal of Sunday hunting bans and restrictions.

The hunting, shooting sports and firearms industries contribute significantly to the betterment of our nation's economy, creating over 285,000 full-time jobs and generating over \$49 billion in economic benefits annually. An economic impact study determined that permitting hunting on Sundays would result in the creation of approximately 8,000 new jobs, paying over \$245 million in wages and generating nearly \$764 million in overall economic activity in the state.

For example, by permitting hunting on Sunday, hunters from other states would be willing to travel to Pennsylvania for a weekend hunting trip during which they would purchase a non-resident hunting license, lodging, food, gas for his or her vehicle, and hunting and related equipment for their hunt. That same hunter is unlikely to make the trip from out-of-state just to hunt on Saturday. During difficult economic times like these, it is our hope that legislators will do all that they can to serve as an economic spark, not an inhibitor.

For the above stated reasons, The National Shooting Sports Foundation supports expanding Sunday hunting. We welcome the opportunity to participate in this important, public policy discussion and to make known our views.

Sincerely yours,



Jake McGuigan