



The Honorable John R. Evans
Chairman
Game and Fisheries Committee
107 Ryan Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2005

Re: H.B. 1760; Expansion of Sunday Hunting

Position: SUPPORT

October 27, 2011

Dear Chairman Evans and Members of the Committee:

My name is Brent Miller, and I am the Northeastern States Manager for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF). CSF is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit governed by a Board of Directors composed of leaders from the top conservation and outdoor industry organizations in the nation. CSF's mission is guided by the commitment to provide a voice for sportsmen in the U.S. Congress, the Administration and federal land management agencies, as well as in state capitols throughout the country. As a program under the CSF banner, the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses exists to promote a sportsmen's agenda in state legislatures by serving as a key information source and providing support staff to nearly 2,000 state legislators that are members of our 39 individual state sportsmen's caucuses.

As an organization, CSF supports the expansion of Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania for the following reasons:

- 1. Wildlife Management:** Sunday hunting will provide the Pennsylvania Game Commission with an additional adaptive management tool so they can more effectively manage wildlife resources within the Commonwealth.
- 2. Economic Considerations:** Several independent economic analyses conducted over the past six years have all shown that the expansion of Sunday hunting will result in hundreds of millions of dollars in economic output and the creation of thousands of much needed jobs, particularly in rural areas that have been the hardest hit by the current recession. The most recent study, commissioned by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee found that over \$800 million in yearly economic activity would result from Sunday hunting which would in turn support over 7,500 jobs.
- 3. Landowner Liberties:** Lifting the ban on Sunday hunting will fundamentally increase private property owners' freedom to choose how to manage their land and its natural resources.

- 4. Hunter Numbers:** Sunday hunting will result in increased opportunity for youth and working class citizens to engage in hunting, leading to higher satisfaction with this time-honored tradition, and ultimately more participation.

The first two of these points have been covered in depth by several of our partners in the two previous hearings on this topic, and will be covered here this morning as well. Therefore, I will focus my comments on the expansion of private property owners' liberties and the potential for Sunday hunting to lead to increased hunter numbers.

The majority of the laws that prohibit various activities on Sundays which were once in place in Pennsylvania have been repealed through time, leaving Sunday hunting as one of the last remaining examples of the initial "blue laws". Presently, the ban on Sunday hunting is infringing on the ability of private property owners to choose how to best manage their land, resources, time, and finances.

Unfortunately, the present restrictions on Sunday hunting limit the amount of non-resident hunters who would otherwise choose Pennsylvania as a destination hunting location. To illustrate the impact that Sunday hunting can have on increasing out-of-state license sales, we need only look across the western border and examine the sales history of Ohio. According to data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for 20 years prior to the passage of Sunday hunting, non-resident license sales only accounted for between 0.67% and 1.37% of total sales. However, since the passage of Sunday hunting, out of state license sales have been steadily increasing to where they now make up well over 8% of all sales. This means that eight times more people are choosing Ohio as a destination hunting location than they were ten years ago when the state's Sunday hunting ban was still in place.

Throughout this debate, there has been much talk about the economic benefits of Sunday hunting to the general economy, but one area that has not been covered in detail is the potential for private property owners to lease their land specifically for hunting. Allowing farmers and other land owners to diversify their income sources by allowing an additional day of hunting on their land will help to provide a large capital influx to rural economies that are hardest hit by the current recession. Historically, hunting related expenditures have proven to be relatively recession proof, and property owners in neighboring states have been afforded the opportunity to benefit from increased hunting related tourism, while Pennsylvania citizens have not.

Landowner freedoms go well beyond the financial benefits realized as a result of leasing one's land, however. Farmers and other private property owners are also being limited in their ability to spend quality time hunting *their own land* with their families, children and friends.

As I mentioned earlier, part of what I want to discuss today is the potential to generate increased hunter numbers as a result of Sunday hunting. This ties in directly to the ability of Pennsylvania hunters to pass down their sportsmen's heritage to the next generation. Prior to accepting my current position with CSF, I wrote my Master's thesis on the topic of Sunday hunting¹. In my

¹This study was conducted under the guidance of a nationally recognized and well published statistician/econometrician and was submitted as part of the requirements of the Master's of Science degree in Environmental Policy at Bard College in upstate New York. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me and I will be happy to explain my results or methodology in more detail.

research, I analyzed the potential for changes in Sunday hunting policy to generate increases in both hunter numbers, as well as funding for state wildlife management agencies throughout the northeast region. I will therefore use the balance of my time to discuss the findings of this research as they relate to Pennsylvania.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for many years, Pennsylvania has had roughly 1,000,000 hunters per year take advantage of the hunting opportunities within the Commonwealth. However, a closer examination of the 30 year trend in license sales shows that there has been an average decrease of the Pennsylvania hunting population of over 11,500 hunters each year. The cumulative effect of this decline shows a three decade (1980-2009) loss of nearly 30% of the Pennsylvania hunting community.

Hunting license sales, as well as Pittman-Robertson apportionments, are key funding sources for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Both of these revenue streams rely on hunter numbers and license sales that provide funding to cover operational expenses and to allow them to continue important conservation work that benefits not only game species, but also their habitat, which indirectly benefits the many other non-game species that live within the ecosystem. Therefore, successful efforts to increase the number of hunters within a state will not only serve to protect and strengthen our hunting heritage, but will also serve to provide additional funding to the very agency that manages the Commonwealth's wildlife resources.

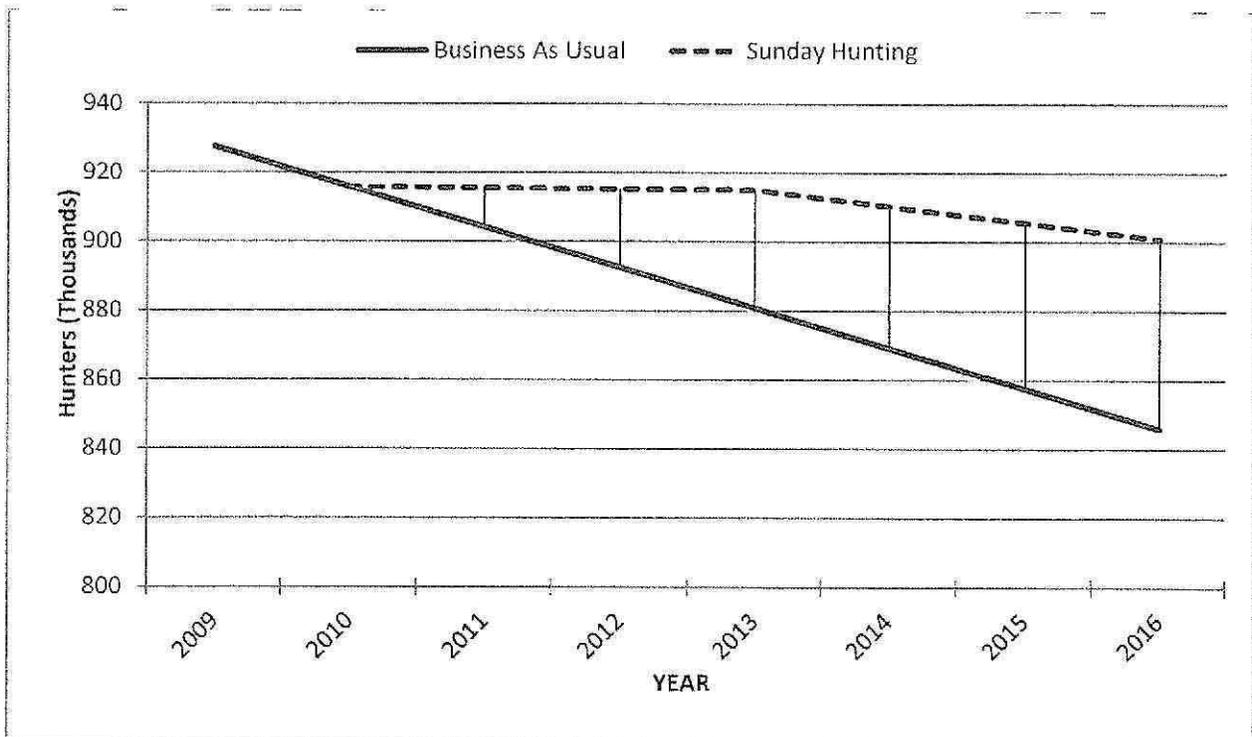


Figure 1: Effect of Lessening Sunday Hunting Restrictions on Hunter Numbers in Pennsylvania

My research examined license sales statistics surrounding the changes in Sunday hunting policies that have occurred within the past 40 years to determine the effect of future repeals. When examining the effect of lessening Sunday restrictions, a trend ($t = 1.6871$; $p = 0.0587$) in license sales

emerged. The analysis revealed a 2.6% improvement in the average rate of license sales growth between the three year periods just prior to and immediately following the first major change in Sunday hunting policy that occurs in a given state. Given these results, the effect of the policy change on license sales was then applied to the license sales trend of Pennsylvania to estimate the increase in hunters (over the business-as-usual decline) that will occur over the next six years. **Figure 1** (previous page) illustrates the difference between the estimated license sales under the Sunday hunting scenario and business-as-usual projections as estimated for Pennsylvania, assuming that Sunday hunting restrictions are lessened or eliminated this year (2011).

As **Figure 1** demonstrates, a change in Sunday hunting policy will produce a momentary halt in the decline of the hunting population. Although the declining trend in license sales will once again resume, the decline will occur at a slower rate than prior to the elimination of Sunday hunting bans. Additionally, the one-time temporary effect creates an improvement in license sales that will continue into the future. As is indicated by **Figure 1**, a change in Sunday hunting policy in and of itself is not sufficient to reverse the decline of hunters within the state of Pennsylvania. However, the results of this study clearly show that there are gains to be realized in both hunter numbers and funding for the Pennsylvania Game Commission (described in detail in **Table 1**).

Table 1: Details on Potential Increases in Hunters and Funding as a Result of Lessening Restrictions on Sunday Hunting for Pennsylvania

Year	Business as Usual - Hunters	Sunday Hunting - Hunters	Hunters Recruited or Retained	Projected Contribution per Hunter	Funding Increase as a Result of Sunday Hunting
2011	904,292	915,699	11,407	\$54.37	\$620,191.06
2012	892,611	915,424	22,813	\$55.46	\$1,265,194.33
2013	880,929	915,149	34,220	\$56.57	\$1,935,754.32
2014	869,248	910,400	41,152	\$57.70	\$2,374,426.51
2015	857,567	905,675	48,108	\$58.85	\$2,831,322.05
2016	845,885	900,974	55,089	\$60.03	\$3,307,015.75
		Total	55,089	Total	\$12,333,904.03

In total, by the end of the six year projection, it is estimated that as a result of Sunday hunting, 55,089 more hunters will be participating in the sport as compared to the projected decline of hunters without the passage of Sunday hunting. These additional hunters would lead to an additional \$12.3 million in funding for the Pennsylvania Game Commission within a six year time span. These figures represent a 6.11% increase in both hunters (as well as the funding stemming from hunters) in year six, simply as a result of allowing Sunday hunting within the commonwealth.

In closing, for the many varied reasons given by our partners in the sportsmen's community, including those presented here today, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation supports any and all efforts to reduce or eliminate the present restrictions on Sunday hunting.

Specifically, CSF fundamentally supports the ability of the private property owners of Pennsylvania to decide for themselves how best to enjoy all that their land has to offer. Whether

they choose to allow Sunday hunting on their land at all; whether they choose to lease their hunting rights on Sunday to diversify their income; whether they choose to enjoy hunting their land with close friends or family; or whether they choose to use Sundays to pass on the time-honored tradition of hunting to their children and grandchildren should be an individual choice - a choice which they are not presently able to exercise on Sunday.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brent Miller".

Brent Miller

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