



NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.

Headquarters: 11 Mile Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470-2359
400 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20001
203-426-1320 ext. 238 jmcguigan@nssf.org

Jake McGuigan

Managing Director,
Government Relations - State Affairs

September 10, 2019

Representative Keith Gillespie
Chair
Game and Fisheries Committee
Room 60 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2005

Position: Support

Re: SB 147 Sunday Hunting

Dear Chair Gillespie and Members of the 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 10,000 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 support for SB 147 which seeks to remove the long overdue prohibition on Sunday hunting.

As members of the Sunday Hunting Coalition, achieving success most recently in West Virginia, Delaware, 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 the sponsors of the bill, united by a shared goal of removing this antiquated prohibition as a top priority in Pennsylvania. This legislative battle has gone on far too long and has been a complete disservice to the sportsmen of the Commonwealth.

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 will more than double the number of days students can hunt.

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.

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..." The fact that the PA Farm Bureau espouses the same rhetoric as one of their greatest enemies to its members' businesses is simply astounding.

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 \$11 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 310,000 full-time jobs and generating over \$52 billion in economic benefits annually. An economic impact study determined that permitting hunting on Sundays would result in the creation of approximately 6,300 new jobs, paying over \$309 million in wages and generating nearly \$972 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jake McGuigan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jake McGuigan
Managing Director State Affairs

RESTRICTIONS ON SUNDAY HUNTING

Today, state laws in the U.S. have little in common with the laws imposed during the colonial period. One exception is the continuation of so called "Blue Laws" that restrict certain activities on Sundays. Originally used as a way for the government to compel colonists to attend church, most restrictions on whether stores can open, families can cook, or whether farmers can till their fields have long since been lifted. By the end of the 19th century, these restrictions began to be challenged by merchants' associations and by 1970 only 25 states still had Blue Laws. This number had fallen to 13 by 1984.ⁱ Today, regardless of whether one believes it should be the government's role to encourage church attendance, **it is interesting to note that states that allow Sunday hunting actually have the highest rates of church attendance in the country.**

restrictions, and simply allow hunting on all Sundays within the dates of the current hunting season, it is estimated that up to 27,000 new jobs would be created. These are good jobs, paying roughly \$730 million in wages, and contributing about \$2.2 billion in additional economic activity to these states.ⁱⁱⁱ

LIMITS CHOICES OF HUNTERS AND FAMILIES

Today many families face busy schedules with long work weeks and weekend extracurricular activities for children on Saturdays. For hunters that see the importance of keeping the tradition of hunting alive for future generations, limiting the time available to hunt alone or with their families is a burden on their goal of promoting tradition. Even for those that would choose not to hunt on Sundays, lifting the government restriction grants all the option to enjoy this activity without artificial schedules imposed.

Sportsmen and women understand the value of being free to choose if and when to hunt during the hunting season, just as Americans are free to decide to participate in other recreational activities such as fishing or boating on Sundays. The current restrictions are supported by extremist animal rights groups and gun control activists who see upholding outdated rules as a way to limit and eventually ban all hunting every day of the week.

- States with Restrictions or Prohibition on Sunday Hunting**
- Connecticut
 - Maine
 - Maryland
 - Massachusetts
 - New Jersey
 - Pennsylvania
 - South Carolina
 - Virginia

Unfortunately for hunters and their families, 8 states continue to restrict hunting on Sundays, with 3 prohibiting hunting on Sundays all together. Despite recent victories secured by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and the Sunday Hunting Coalition, more needs to be done to remove antiquated and unnecessary government restrictions on Sunday hunting.ⁱⁱ

RESTRICTS CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Wildlife conservation is funded in part by the sale of hunting licenses, as well as the sale of firearms and ammunition. Some states that restrict Sunday hunting, such as Pennsylvania, are seeing a decrease in hunting license sales as hunters choose to travel to neighboring states for weekend hunting trips and as out-of-state hunters forgo restricted states as a destination in favor of states that allow for a full weekend of hunting. More hunting tourism would help reverse the loss in conservation dollars.

ONLY THREE STATES BAN SUNDAY HUNTING: MA, ME AND PA



RESTRAINS ECONOMIC GROWTH

Allowing hunting on Sundays would lead to a boost in state economies. If all 8 states with limits or outright bans on Sunday hunting were to eliminate these outdated

continued →



The National Shooting Sports Foundation
Economic Impact of Hunting
2016/2017 Data Pennsylvania Sunday Hunting Impact



Direct Economic Impact			
	Jobs	Wages	Output
Manufacturing	13	\$ 923,901	\$ 7,878,853
Services	1,420	\$ 44,885,785	\$ 216,329,736
Retailing	2,333	\$ 74,901,309	\$ 156,506,472
Total	3,767	\$ 120,710,995	\$ 380,715,060

Supplier Impact			
	Jobs	Wages	Output
Agriculture	37	\$ 11,284	\$ 35,644
Business and Personal Services	384	\$ 34,232,336	\$ 60,435,233
Construction	38	\$ 3,218,536	\$ 6,934,251
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	140	\$ 10,055,482	\$ 41,092,979
Government	15	\$ 1,464,694	\$ 2,172,128
Manufacturing	188	\$ 17,036,038	\$ 114,830,248
Mining	35	\$ 3,143,670	\$ 12,264,939
Other	-	\$ -	\$ -
Retailing	10	\$ 412,834	\$ 801,300
Transportation and Communication	117	\$ 11,894,299	\$ 34,806,268
Travel and Entertainment	73	\$ 2,423,528	\$ 5,970,091
Wholesaling	46	\$ 5,089,060	\$ 12,238,935
Total	1,084	\$ 88,981,761	\$ 291,582,017

Induced Economic Impact			
	Jobs	Wages	Output
Agriculture	22	\$ 721,394	\$ 2,260,733
Business and Personal Services	601	\$ 45,094,773	\$ 77,147,260
Construction	14	\$ 1,142,058	\$ 3,230,600
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	166	\$ 13,409,905	\$ 66,937,798
Government	17	\$ 1,451,439	\$ 2,490,321
Manufacturing	89	\$ 8,514,295	\$ 67,770,278
Mining	8	\$ 744,827	\$ 4,498,230
Other	24	\$ 353,083	\$ 1,743,220
Retailing	219	\$ 8,989,935	\$ 18,273,134
Transportation and Communication	78	\$ 7,746,678	\$ 26,850,709
Travel and Entertainment	189	\$ 6,337,409	\$ 15,953,273
Wholesaling	49	\$ 5,476,403	\$ 13,136,515
Total	1,476	\$ 99,982,200	\$ 300,292,071

	Jobs	Wages	Output
Total Economic Impact	6,326	\$ 309,674,956	\$ 972,589,148

Note: Based on a model of the Hunting Industry Developed by John Dunham & Associates for the National Shooting Sports Foundation in 2015 based on data from *Hunting and Fishing: Bright Stars of the American Economy*, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, 2007, and updated to reflect total hunting days for 2016 data from the NSSF, total 2017 hunting license data in Pennsylvania from the Pennsylvania Game Commission and updated spending on Hunting from the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Census Bureau.

**Sunday Hunting: Good for Rural PA
Why Would PA Farm Bureau Oppose?**

Hunters know that their sport has many benefits. These include quality time in nature with friends and family, participating in a long-standing tradition of securing a healthy food source, honing a skill, all while helping to responsibly control the wildlife population.

But what is less acknowledged is the benefit that hunting provides to communities in Pennsylvania. Even the state’s Farm Bureau opposes efforts to allow hunting on Sundays, which would increase the benefits to the areas served by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania quantifies these benefits in a December 2018 report, “An Economic Evaluation of the Pennsylvania State Forest System.”¹ **According to the findings, hunting trips and equipment-related expenditures provides rural Pennsylvania with an economic boost of about \$93.4 million.**

Right now, the legislature is considering removing the current Colonial-era ban on hunting on Sundays. Many hunters are limited to weekends to hunt, and Sunday hunting would effectively double their hunting days and would bring in out of state hunters that wish to spend a weekend hunting in Pennsylvania.

The Center’s report found that about 10 percent of the hunters were nonresidents of Pennsylvania who spend approximately \$5.6 million on trip-related expenditures for hunting and \$9.1 million on equipment-related expenditures for hunting. Sunday hunting would make it more attractive to nonresidents who are looking for a weekend hunting trip destination.

Above and beyond the \$93.4 million hunting contributes to rural Pennsylvania, the report also noted that there are “3,985 leased campsites on state forestland where individuals own and maintain a cabin but lease the land. These cabins are typically used as family camping cabins or group hunting cabins. They also create economic impact beyond that associated with recreational visits as the cabin owners must pay local property taxes and water and electric utilities (when available). The money spent on cabin improvements and maintenance may also create a notable economic impact.”

Why then, does the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, represented by Darrin Youker on the Center’s board, oppose efforts to allow hunting on Sundays? With such a benefit to rural Pennsylvania, it is irrational to oppose increasing opportunities to add more benefits to the very communities served by the Farm Bureau.

Trip Expenditures	Hunting Expenditures	State Forest Modifier	Hunting Total Modified	FINAL MODEL
Food and lodging - Food	\$16,741,762	16%	\$2,678,682	\$31,713,238
Food and Lodging - Lodging	\$996,238	16%	\$159,398	\$6,639,722
Transportation	\$15,182,000	16%	\$2,429,120	\$11,967,200
Boating costs	\$19,000	16%	\$3,040	\$930,100
Fee-Guide fees, package fees, privilege fees	\$1,237,937	16%	\$198,070	\$1,381,555
Fee-Public land use fee	\$101,376	16%	\$16,220	\$428,693
Fee-Equipment rental	\$157,268	16%	\$25,163	\$399,154
Heating and cooking fuel	\$830,879	16%	\$132,941	\$434,778

¹ The researchers used existing data to conduct economic contribution and impact analyses for recreational trips made to state forestlands. For the contribution analysis, the researchers used existing expenditure data – how much people spend on recreational trips made to state forestlands – from visitor-use-monitoring surveys conducted specifically for Pennsylvania’s state forests (Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 2016a).

Telescopic sights	\$3,905,205	16%	\$624,833	\$624,833
Decoys and game calls	\$2,222,447	16%	\$355,591	\$355,591
Ammunition	\$9,555,620	16%	\$1,528,899	\$1,528,899
Hand loading equipment	\$1,464,624	16%	\$234,340	\$234,340
Hunting dogs/associated costs	\$6,999,425	16%	\$1,119,908	\$1,119,908
Other hunting equipment	\$3,472,962	16%	\$555,674	\$555,674
Total Equipment-Related Expenditures	\$56,948,000		\$9,111,680	\$37,239,679
<i>Total Trip & Equipment-Related Expenditures</i>	<i>\$127,480,920</i>		<i>\$14,754,314</i>	<i>\$93,425,567</i>

Total Trip-Related Expenditures	\$35,266,460		\$5,642,634	\$56,185,888
Equipment Expenditures				
Rifles/firearms	\$10,517,035	16%	\$1,682,726	\$1,682,726
Short gun	\$6,730,880	16%	\$1,076,941	\$1,076,941
Muzzleloaders, pistols	\$898,082	16%	\$143,693	\$143,693
Pistols and handguns	\$4,301,978	16%	\$688,316	\$688,316
Bows, arrows, archery equipment	\$6,879,742	16%	\$1,100,759	\$1,100,759