

# Stoney Creek Fishing & Hunting Club

9090 Ft. Smallwood Rd.  
Pasadena, MD 21122

January 22, 2020

**HB 35: Public Safety – Firearm Telematics - Study**  
**Testimony by Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club**  
**Oppose**

The Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club, which has some 300 members and has been in existence for over 70 years, **OPPOSES** HB 35. We oppose the Bill because it has the potential of opening the door to the theft of privately owned firearms, may endanger the lives of those individuals with concealed carry permits, may be miss used by law enforcement organizations, and the installation and use of such tracking devices on firearms apparently would violate the laws of Maryland.

HB 35 would direct the Maryland State Police (MSP) to study and make recommendations concerning the feasibility, availability and potential use of firearm telematics, "...telematics to recover lost or stolen firearms." Per the Bill, "...firearms telematics means an electronic sensor or equipment installed on a firearm designed to track the location of the firearm if it becomes lost or stolen."

No examples are cited in the Bill concerning what types of "telematic" tracking devices are available, but logic would point to the most common positioning system in use today, the Global Positioning System, or GPS. It is in extensive use for the navigation and control of commercial aircraft, navigation of ocean going vessels, expediting ground delivery systems, in personal automobiles as well as in cell phones. We make no judgment as to whether it would be feasible to install such devices on firearms without interfering with the latter's operation.

Of greater concern is the fact that GPS is very vulnerable to outside influences. According to *Scientific American* ("GPS Down", Vol. 321, Issue 6, p. 38-45, December 1, 2019).

"Because of the great distance the waves must travel—more than 12,000 miles between satellites and receivers on Earth—the signals are very weak and easily overridden, or jammed...They are also easy to "spoofer": a slightly stronger signal from a soft-ware defined-radio—a broadcast that can be created by software on a laptop-can deliver a false message or replay an authentic message infused with false information, causing the receiver to believe it is somewhere, or *somewhen*, it is not."

"Hackers can jam a signal by drowning it out with meaningless noise, or they can spoof it by feeding the receiver false time or coordinates, which will disorient the receiver in time or space..."

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Thus, given the vulnerabilities of GPS, what would keep criminal elements from defeating efforts by law enforcement agencies to track “stolen “firearms? Or worse yet, what would prevent criminals from using the system to locate firearms owned by law abiding citizens for the purpose of stealing their firearms be it from their vehicles or homes?

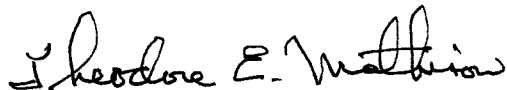
Perhaps more unsettling criminals could identify and track individuals who are lawfully carrying concealed firearms thereby placing the lives of these individuals in jeopardy. Such individuals could easily be ambushed, not only for the firearm they are carrying but for any valuables such as expensive jewelry, cash, etc.

There is also the potential for unscrupulous law enforcement agencies to use the tracking technology to follow the movements, or possession, of firearms by law abiding citizens, as opposed to lost or stolen firearms. We have seen all too well here in Maryland what nefarious actions an out of control law enforcement agency can undertake.

Lastly, there appears to be some question under Maryland statutes whether a law enforcement agency could legally install a tracking device on an item of personal property at time of purchase, or even on a firearm already owned, without the consent of the owner. If at the time of firearm purchase, the owner refused to have the tracking device installed, would this prohibit the sale? Also would a court order be required for the law enforcement agency to actually track the firearm? We believe these legal issues need to be addressed before any consideration is given to initiating a study of the feasibility of installing tracking devices on firearms in Maryland.

In view of the potential problems and dangers enumerated above, we believe the Bill is an “accident looking for a place to happen”. Accordingly, the Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club is very much opposed the Bill

We request that HB 35 receive an unfavorable report.



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