

Jamie Wink
Wink's Sporting Goods
12122A Carol Lane
Princess Anne, MD 21853
410-621-0400
Gwink222@aol.com

I am writing in strong opposition to HB 935, which proposes an 11% tax on guns and ammunition. As a constituent, a hunter and a Business owner that will be negatively impacted by this bill, I feel compelled to voice how this legislation, though perhaps well-intentioned, will disproportionately affect traditional hunters like myself and have far-reaching negative implications for our community.

First and foremost, hunting is not merely a hobby or sport for many of us; it is a way of life that has been passed down through generations. It is deeply woven into the fabric of our community, contributing to our cultural heritage, conservation efforts, and local economies. The proposed tax increase threatens to undermine this tradition by placing an undue financial burden on responsible hunters who rely on access to affordable equipment to sustain their way of life.

The financial implications of this tax are particularly concerning for hunters, many of whom are not pursuing game for trophies but for sustenance and management of wildlife populations. Especially in Somerset County, which has the lowest median household income, the additional cost could significantly limit access to hunting for lower and middle-income families, for whom the price increase on guns and ammunition could be prohibitive. This could lead to a decline in hunting participation, negatively affecting wildlife conservation funding since much of it is supported by the revenue from hunting licenses and related equipment purchases.

Moreover, the proposed tax could inadvertently encourage hunters to seek out cheaper, potentially less safe alternatives for equipment, compromising safety standards in our community. The focus should remain on promoting responsible gun ownership and use, rather than imposing financial penalties that could have unintended negative consequences.

Also, I am uniquely impacted by this bill, being the owner of a business that is directly associated with hunting. The majority of my business revolves around hunting. This bill would greatly reduce my sales and would impact the five families that support their families through our hunting business. In Maryland there are not many places that are far from a bordering state, this bill would drive customers to neighboring states for their firearms, ammo and other hunting equipment. This not only would hurt my business, but many other businesses like mine, as well as cut down on sales tax revenues for the state. In small communities like ours, hunting is huge to our local economies through out-of-town hunters, and this tax will only place an extra financial burden on hunters which would in turn affect our local economy.

I understand and share the concerns about crime, the different types of violence and the need for measures to address this issue. However, targeting traditional hunters with this tax does not effectively address the root causes of crime and violence. Instead, I urge you to consider alternative approaches that target the actual sources of gun violence without unfairly penalizing law-abiding citizens who are practicing their traditional and legal activities.

In closing, I respectfully request that you oppose the proposed 11% tax on guns and ammunition. I believe that by working together, we can find balanced solutions that ensure public safety while preserving our cherished hunting traditions and the economic benefits they bring to our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my views on HB 935 and urge an unfavorable report in order to protect traditional hunting practices and small business in this great state of Maryland.