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February 11, 2025

Honorable Members of the
Maryland House Ways and Means Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Md. 21401

**Subject: HB-0937
Sales and Use Tax – Firearms, Firearms Accessories, and Ammunition –
Rate Alteration**

OPPOSE

Dear Honorable Delegates:

I represent the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc. The Coalition is comprised of many hunting clubs and sportsmen's associations and thousands of their individual members living in Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Carroll Counties. As President of the Coalition, I work together with the leadership of these Western Maryland Sportsmen's organizations for the recognition and benefit of the sportsmen and sportswomen of the five most western counties of Maryland.

On February 13th your committee will be hearing the advantages and disadvantages of HB-0937 (Sales and Use Tax – Firearms, Firearms Accessories, and Ammunition – Rate Alteration). I, as a private citizen of this state and as the elected representative of the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc. **strongly urge you to oppose HB-0937.**

Over the past decade, and more and more increasingly, there has been legislation proposed in our State Legislature that, in one form or fashion, is solely designed to discourage sportsmen and women from participating in any firearms related activity, be it hunting, trap and skeet shooting or other shooting competitions.

Garrett

Allegany

Washington

Frederick

Carroll

HB-0937 is just another example of this never-ending endeavor. The firearms sportsmen and women of this state are already carrying the burden of a 10% federal excise tax on all handguns, an 11% federal excise tax on rifles, shotguns and ammunition and a state sales tax of 6% on all the above. There is even another bill in your committee right now proposing an additional 11% state excise tax on the sale of firearms (HB-0387).

The passage of this bill (HB-0937) which proposes to double the current sales and use tax of 6% to a back breaking 12% on all firearms, firearm accessories and ammunition would be incredibly hurtful. The Fiscal and Policy Note on a similar bill last year acknowledged that the additional tax burden to our sportsmen and sportswomen would be millions of dollars in additional taxes levied on the sportsmen's gear in the first year alone. In our rural communities of Western Maryland there are many small sports shops that will take a serious financial hit by their customers driving a short distance to either Virginia, West Virginia, or Pennsylvania to purchase scopes, optics and or ammunition simply to avoid additional taxation. These small businesses already bear the burden of competing with internet sales availability of some of these items.

It seems tremendously unfair and unwise to target our sports community to financially support the bloated spending spree of our State Government. Perhaps an additional tax on liquor or gasoline or gambling would be a more equitable way to achieve funding for these programs by spreading out the financial burden along a much wider consumer base.

Together with the sportsmen and sportswomen of Western Maryland, I strongly urge you to oppose HB-0937. (just another tax)

Respectfully,

Ben Kelkye

Ben Kelkye	President, WMSC, President Frederick County Sportsmen's Council
Jerry Zembower	President, Garrett & Allegany Sportsmen's Association
Joe Winter	President, Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Matt Guilfoyle	President, Carroll County Sportsmen's Association

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