



To: Joint Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
State House, Room 436
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD 1071 – An Act to Prohibit the Sale of High-Capacity Magazines

Position: Oppose

Date: May 10, 2019

Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

I write today to express the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation's (CSF) opposition to LD 1071 – legislation that would make it a Class D crime for individuals to sell firearm magazines that have the capacity or can readily be converted to accept more than ten rounds of ammunition.

Since 1989, CSF has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the interests of America's hunters and anglers.

Numerous concerns are raised in reference to provisions within the text of LD 1071, as well as the implications that it would have on Maine's sportsmen and associated conservation funding.

Summarily, LD 1071 prohibits the unauthorized selling or supplying of a "high-capacity magazine" to another person, further defining it as "a firearm magazine, belt, drum, feed strip or similar device that is used to insert ammunition into a chamber of a firearm and that has the capacity of or can be readily converted to contain or accept more than 10 rounds of ammunition." In reality, countless firearms are built and sold from the manufacturer with magazine capacities that exceed 10 rounds. The label "high-capacity," in this sense, is referencing a magazine style that often is a factory standard. Ultimately, LD 1071 is classifying a common industry instrument as a "high-capacity magazine," which will result in a greater strain on Maine's sporting community. Therefore, this bill would place a significant financial burden on the State's sportsmen and women, inhibiting the secondary market for firearms, and further preventing these individuals from pursuing their time-honored American traditions.

In the United States, sportsmen and women play a crucial role in funding conservation efforts in through the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF). The American System is a “user-pays, public-benefits” structure, in which those that consumptively use public resources pay for the privilege, and in some cases the right, to do so. State fish and wildlife agencies receive approximately 60% of their funding through this distinct conservation system, though some states still rely nearly 100% on the funding from sportsmen and women.

Through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson Act) and the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson Act), excise taxes collected from sporting goods purchases as well as associated user license purchases are funneled back into conservation. These excise taxes are used to fund a wide variety of activities including: fish and wildlife research, private and public habitat management, hunter education, shooting range development, land acquisition and easements, and angler access area construction. Without the ability to purchase or hunt with firearms that have the magazines referenced above, hunters are likely to become disincentivized to participate in their pursuits. The State, therefore, loses valuable conservation funds that are so needed for wildlife conservation efforts.

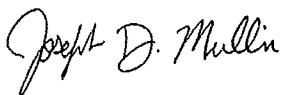
Since 1939, state fish and wildlife agencies around the U.S. have received over \$56.9 billion from sportsmen and women through this funding structure. Directly pertaining to the State of Maine, the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) states the following:

Most of our work with game animals and furbearers, many of the salaries, and most of the administrative costs of the Wildlife Division, are funded by hunting license and permit revenues, which are matched by federal Pittman-Robertson Funds (based on an 11% excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition, and archery equipment, and a 10% excise tax on handguns). These funds have been critical to conserving game species and their habitat and have provided numerous secondary benefits to nongame species as well.¹

This legislation will also severely impact recreational target shooters, who per-capita, spend even more money on firearms and ammunition than hunters. According to a National Shooting Sports Foundation estimate, “80 percent of Pittman-Robertson excise tax contributions are generated by sales attributed to recreational shooting.”²

In recognition of the negative bearings that LD 1071 would have on Maine’s sportsmen and women, along with the loss in conservation funds that the State would likely experience as a result of this bill, CSF stands in firm opposition. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Joseph Mullin
New England States Coordinator | Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
Jmullin@congressionalsportsmen.org | 202-253-6883

¹ *Support Wildlife Conservation in Maine*. Accessed on May 6, 2019. <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/fish-wildlife/wildlife/support-wildlife/index.html>.

² *NSSF Commends Congress’s Passage of ‘Range Bill.’* Accessed on May 6, 2019. <https://www.nssf.org/nssf-commends-congresss-passage-of-range-bill/>.