



CAMPAIGN FOR SPORTSMEN'S ACT UNDERWAY IN NEW CONGRESS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 05, 2015

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S.

To protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, shooting, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

introduced the following bill; which and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act of 2015”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—REGULATORY REFORMS

- Sec. 101. Modification of definition of sport fishing equipment under the Consumer Product Safety Act.
- Sec. 102. Target practice and marksmanship.

The Boone and Crockett Club applauds the introduction in the U.S. Senate of the Sportsmen’s Act of 2015—a bipartisan proposal representing years of focus on pressing issues in conservation.

The measure promotes conservation, hunting, angling, sport shooting, and traditional outdoor lifestyles. The bill’s lead sponsors are Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), and the Senate leadership of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus: U.S. Senators Jim Risch (R-Idaho), Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.), Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), and Deb Fischer (R-Neb).

The Club supports the senators’ focus on access to public lands as the driving issue for the bill, which is a package of several bipartisan measures to enhance access and habitat management for the benefit of hunters, anglers, and outdoor recreation enthusiasts. The package bill also reauthorizes key conservation programs, improves access to public lands, and helps boost the outdoor recreation economy.

“The successful negotiations that produced this bill are a testament of the strength and unity of the sportsmen’s community in Washington, D.C. We would not be able to do this without the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus and the American Wildlife Conservation Partners,” said Bob Model, chairman of the Boone and Crockett Club Policy Committee.

This year’s Sportsmen’s Act is built upon previous versions in the last two Congressional sessions.

“The new bill will differ from last year only in dropping a couple provisions that have been enacted separately, and in adding a couple issues that have ripened in the past year,” said Morrie Stevens, Sr., president of the Club.

At the top of the “ripened” list is a Boone and Crockett priority measure, the Open Book on Equal Access to Justice Act. This bill passed the House last year with no dissent. It was then added as an amendment to the Sportsmen’s Act. The measure would create an online public database of info on court cases against the U.S. government. Federal agencies do not keep usable data on cases brought against them, according to investigations by the Government Accounting Office.

Stevens explained, “We’re concerned that litigation too often needlessly impedes the work of conservation agencies. After all, litigation is now a regular feature of environmental policy. Therefore, in the public interest, the full impacts of litigation must be transparent and understood and guided—as all public policy should be.”

Numerous sporting conservation groups have worked together to make this bill possible and that have banded together to support its passage and enactment.

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THE SPORTSMEN'S ACT BILL SUMMARY

Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act Reauthorization (FTFLA):

This section reauthorizes the BLM's authority to sell land to private land owners, counties, companies and others for ranching, community development and various projects. This "Land for Land" approach creates jobs and generates funding for BLM, USFS, NPS and USFWS to acquire critical in-holdings from willing sellers. The sales revenue allows agencies to acquire high priority lands with important wildlife habitat value and recreational access for hunting and fishing.

Polar Bear Conservation and Fairness Act:

This bill allows for the Secretary to authorize permits for re-importation of legally harvested polar bears from approved populations in Canada before the 2008 ban.

Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act:

This legislation would grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize any state to issue electronic duck stamps. It also outlines electronic duck stamp application requirements.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Reauthorization (NAWCA):

This section reauthorizes the North American Wetlands Conservation Act for another five years. NAWCA is a voluntary landowner-friendly initiative that uses incentives

to provide valuable matching grants that leverage federal dollars to protect habitat that is critically important for migratory birds, such as ducks and other wildlife. Over the last 20 years, NAWCA has completed over 2,000 conservation projects to protect 26.5 million acres of habitat. This voluntary program has over 4,500 partners and has leveraged nearly three dollars for every dollar spent by the federal government.

The Hunting, Fishing and Recreational Shooting Protection Act:

This section specifically excludes ammunition and fishing tackle from the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), leaving decisions about tackle to state fish and game agencies and the Fish and Wildlife Service, who currently regulate ammo and tackle. The EPA has denied petitions to regulate tackle and ammo under TSCA in 1994 and again in 2011. This codifies that the EPA does not have the ability to regulate tackle. This includes a savings clause for local, state, and other federal regulations.

Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act:

This provision would protect the public right to engage in recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting on federal lands. It mandates that lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service be open to recreational hunting, fishing, and

shooting unless specifically closed by the agencies. It also supports Executive Order 13443, which directs federal land management agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting on federal lands, and ensures sound scientific management of wildlife and their habitat.

Bows Transported through National Parks:

This provision clarifies the 2007 legislation, and will allow bows to be transported across national park lands. Currently, firearms can be legally transported, but not bows. This poses a practical problem for bow hunters who want to legally hunt on Forest Service or BLM lands, but must cross National Park Service lands.

Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act:

Amends the Pittman-Robertson Act by adjusting the funding limitations. This allows states more funds available for a longer period of time for the creation and maintenance of shooting ranges. The bill encourages federal land agencies to cooperate with state and local authorities to maintain shooting ranges and limits liability for these agencies.

Recreational Lands Self-Defense Act:

This legislation prohibits the Secretary of the Army from promulgating or enforcing any regulation that prohibits an individual from possessing a

firearm at a water resources development project administered by the Chief of Engineers if: (1) the individual is not otherwise prohibited by law from possessing the firearm, and (2) the possession of the firearm is in compliance with the law of the state in which the project is located.

Duck Stamp Subsistence Waiver:

This provision would grant the Secretary of the Interior the authority to make limited waivers of duck stamp requirements for certain subsistence users.

Public Lands Filming:

This legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (the Secretary), for any film crew of five persons or fewer, to require a permit and assess an annual fee of \$200 for commercial filming activities or similar projects on federal lands and waterways administered by the Secretary. Prohibits the Secretary, for persons holding such a permit, from assessing any additional fee for commercial filming activities and similar projects that occur in those areas during specific hours. Bars the Secretary from prohibiting, as a mechanized apparatus or under any other purposes, the use of cameras or related equipment used for commercial filming activities or similar projects in accordance with this Act on federal lands and waterways administered by the Secretary. ■