

Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015

FAST FACTS

The National Shooting Sports Foundation supports S.405, the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015. This historic legislation is simply the most important package of measures for the benefit of sportsmen in a generation. Sponsored by Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), and Martin Heinrich (D-NM), S. 405 will promote, protect and preserve our nation's hunting, shooting sports and conservation heritage. This legislation has also been introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Robert Wittman (R-VA) as the SHARE Act, H.R. 2406. The House version has already passed the House by a broad bipartisan vote of 242-161.

Among the important provisions included in S. 405, three are top legislative priorities for NSSF.

This vital piece of legislation will:

- provide state fish & game agencies with more flexibility to use Pittman-Robertson funds to build and maintain badly needed public shooting ranges
- help facilitate and provide for more access to Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands and waters for hunting, recreational fishing and shooting

Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support

In recent years, opportunities for Americans to safely engage in recreational and competitive shooting have declined on both public and private lands. The Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act would help address this loss of access by allowing states to allocate a greater proportion of their federal Pittman-Robertson wildlife funds to the development of shooting ranges.

Specifically, the measure would:

- Authorize states to charge up to 90 percent, instead of the current 75 percent, of the costs of acquiring land for expanding or constructing a public target range to its allotted Pittman-Robertson funds. In other words, the bill would allow states to move forward on a project with only a 10 percent match as opposed to the current 25 percent requirement.
- Allow Pittman-Robertson funds allotted to a state to remain available and accrue for five fiscal years, rather than the current two years, for use in acquiring land for expanding or constructing a public target range.
- Encourage federal land management agencies to cooperate with state and local authorities to maintain target ranges on federal land.

Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) introduced the Target Practice & Marksmanship Training Support Act as a stand-alone bill, S.721. The legislation has not been introduced as a stand-alone measure in the House.

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Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities

The Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act is vital to protecting America's sporting heritage through the expansion and enhancement of hunting and shooting opportunities on federal lands. Among other provisions, the establishment of an "open unless closed" policy for recreational hunting, fishing and shooting on lands managed by the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, would ensure public land is available for responsible public use.

Among other provisions, the measure would:

- Require federal public land management officials to exercise their authority under existing law to facilitate access to federal lands

for sport hunting, and recreational shooting.

- Allow federal agencies to lease their lands for shooting ranges, and designate specific lands for recreational shooting activities.
- Set forth requirements for specified closures or significant restrictions involving 640 or more contiguous acres of federal public lands or waters to fishing or hunting or related activities.
- Require that recreational hunting, fishing and shooting be addressed in land management plans.

A stand-alone bill has not been reintroduced in the Senate. In the House, Rep. Dan Benishek (R-MI) introduced the measure as H.R. 528.

Making Public Lands Public

This provision would require that the 1.5 percent (or \$10 million, whichever is greater) of annual Land and Water Conservation funding is made available to secure recreational public access to existing federal public lands that have significantly restricted access to hunting, fishing, and other recreational purposes.

Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced the Making Public Lands Public Act as a stand-alone bill, S.390. The legislation has not been introduced as a stand-alone measure in the House.



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3/16

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