

**Archery Trade Association * Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies *
Boone & Crockett Club * Bowhunting Preservation Alliance *
Campfire Club of America * Catch-A-Dream Foundation *
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Conservation Force * Dallas Safari Club *
Delta Waterfowl Foundation * Ducks Unlimited * Mule Deer Foundation *
National Rifle Association * National Shooting Sports Foundation *
National Trappers Association * National Wild Turkey Federation *
North American Bear Foundation * North American Grouse Partnership *
Quality Deer Management Association * Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation *
Ruffed Grouse Society * Safari Club International *
US Sportsmen's Alliance * Wild Sheep Foundation * Wildlife Management Institute ***

November 14, 2013

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder,

Our organizations represent millions of sportsmen and women that actively support wildlife conservation and the preservation and enhancement of our nation's hunting and recreational shooting heritage. We are writing to respectfully request that the Justice Department, through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), finalize and begin to implement the necessary policy to apply the "sporting purposes" exemption to the definition of armor piercing ammunition set forth in the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA).

Under the GCA, most non-lead rifle hunting ammunition is illegal to import, make and sell unless the ATF determines it is exempt for being: "primarily intended to be used for a sporting purpose." In recent years, a number of manufacturers have been working to develop and market new and innovative hunting ammunition comprised of a wide array of metals and alloys such as brass and copper. However, many of these cause the ammunition to fail a composition test set forth in the GCA which subjects the products to a ruling by the ATF on their intended use. As a result, a significant number of petitions have been submitted in recent years requesting exemptions for products clearly "intended for a sporting purpose." Unfortunately, the ATF has given little indication as to when they will process these petitions.

Recently, Governor Jerry Brown signed legislation, passed by California's Assembly, to ban traditional lead ammunition for hunting. While California is the first State to enact such a ban, similar proposals exist on the state and local levels throughout the country. As a result, the ability of manufacturers to bring non-lead ammunition to market is increasingly crucial to the continued vitality of hunting and recreational shooting. However, the widespread manufacture and availability of this ammunition depends on assured markets provided by reasonable regulation and enforcement at the federal level.

ATF's refusal to apply the sporting purposes test is resulting in a lack of the certainty needed for many companies to invest in the research and development needed to foster technological advancements in high performance and cost-effective ammunition. If this continues, it will result in the loss of hunters and recreational shooters which will have significant economic impacts. For example, in 2012 the firearms and ammunition industries were responsible for \$33.36 billion in total economic activity. In addition, hunting alone supports nearly 700,000 jobs.

Additionally, further inaction will result in considerable reductions in federal excise taxes the firearms and ammunition industries pay on their products as a means of funding habitat conservation throughout the country. In 2012, these taxes generated \$371.3 million for wildlife management and habitat conservation across the country. In fact, hunters, recreational shooters and firearms and ammunition manufacturers are the largest financial supporters of wildlife conservation throughout the United States having contributed approximately \$8.2 billion to habitat conservation and wildlife management through Pittman-Robertson excise tax payments since the program's inception.

We understand that the goal of the GCA's armor piercing ammunition provisions is to protect law enforcement officers. While we share this goal, implementation of the GCA should not result in unnecessary and unreasonable restrictions that are detrimental to our nation's sportsmen and the economic and conservation benefits they generate.

For these reasons, we urge you to take the actions necessary to ensure the timely adoption of the policies necessary for the ATF to apply objective, common sense criteria for processing petitions to the "sporting purposes" exemption in the Gun Control Act of 1968.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

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cc: ATF Director B. Todd Jones