

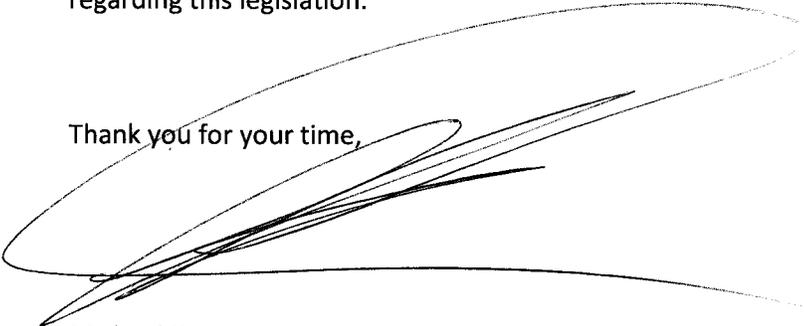
Fish and Game Committee Members:

On behalf of Headwaters Sportsman's Association, I would like to voice my opposition to House Bill 159. Regulation of arms and ammunition for the purpose of hunting should be the authority of the Fish and Game Commission. Our Fish and Game Commission has consistently shown the desire to place as few restrictions as possible on the arms and ammunition used for hunting in Montana. This is a good thing. Montana hunters, unlike in many states, enjoy the freedom to choose the proper weapon for their hunting needs. After several years spent selling firearms and hunting equipment to Montana hunters, I firmly believe this decision is best left up to the hunter, for the vast majority of hunters choose equipment that is well suited to their needs.

The Fish and Game Commission is also best equipped to manage any restrictions. We have a full time Commission and a part time Legislature. Any policy changes requiring immediate action are more efficiently solved at the Commission level, as the commission can act swiftly to any potential changes. Removing this authority from the Fish and Game Commission sets a dangerous precedent for additional changes in the future.

Additionally, Game Wardens must be able to enforce federal arms and ammunition policies. Stripping this power from Game Wardens will compromise their authority in the eyes of hunters. Without this authority, hunters will be more likely to break federal laws. The requirement to use non-toxic shot for the taking of waterfowl is a prime example. I appreciate your time and consideration of these topics regarding this legislation.

Thank you for your time,



Michael Kotur