



# Resourceful Information

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN DOC HASTINGS

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## **Congress Must Act Now to Stop Bureaucratic Threats to Hunting and Fishing**

*H.R. 4089 Protects Sportsmen's Rights on Public Lands from Gov Red Tape and Regulations*

Today the House of Representatives will consider [H.R. 4089](#), the *Sportsmen's Heritage Act of 2012*. The ability of sportsmen to hunt, fish and shoot on public lands is currently being threatened by actions of the Obama Administration and activist environmental groups. Proposals to block access to public land and ban certain types of ammunition would cost jobs and cause economic harm in rural America. H.R. 4089 seeks to protect hunting and fishing activities on public lands and protect the use of traditional ammunition and fishing tackle. Below are specific examples of how bureaucratic regulations are threatening the rights of sportsmen and why this bill is necessary.

### **Example #1: Groups Seeking EPA Ban on Traditional Ammunition and Fishing Tackle**

- Despite a long-standing federal law banning the EPA from regulating lead ammunition, on March 13, 2012 the Center for Biological Diversity, along with over 100 other environmental groups, filed a petition with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) demanding a ban on all lead ammunition and lead in fishing tackle.
- A ban on lead bullets and tackle would increase costs for hunters, sport shooters, and fishermen; destroy jobs; and cause economic harm to the sportsmen and recreation industry.
- According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation Traditional Ammunition Economic Impact Study, banning the use of lead in ammunition could drive costs up to 190 percent more than traditional ammunition. The restriction will also lead to lost tax and licensing revenues due to decreased demand for hunting and recreational shooting activities. License fees and excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and tackle are the primary source of funds for most state wildlife agencies.
- H.R. 4089 would block an end-run around existing law and bar the EPA from banning such ammunition.

### **Example #2: BLM Considered Plan to Limit Shooting on Public Lands**

- Last year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) considered a plan to limit target shooting in certain areas. A BLM spokesman told U.S. News and World Report that the proposed ban were being enacted in response to urbanites that "freak out" when they hear shooting on public lands. He also acknowledged that the impetus for this restriction was not rooted in safety, but rather it was introduced to reduce "social conflict."
- Following a public outcry, Secretary Salazar abandoned the draft plan, issuing a memo directing BLM to "take no further action to develop or implement" the draft policy on recreational shooting. However, nothing prevents a future bureaucratic maneuver to limit access.
- H.R. 4089 requires BLM to justify recreational shooting closures or restrictions on national monument lands for only reasons of national security, public safety or to comply with federal and state laws or regulations.

### **Example #3: Administration Considers Unnecessary Closures of Public Lands to Hunting and Shooting in Response to Litigation**

- As a result of a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals, the Forest Service was forced to divert resources into preparing costly paperwork (a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement) to evaluate a proposed ban on firearm hunting and snowmobile use on more than 66,500 acres in Michigan's Huron-Manistee National Forest.
- A letter from organizations that represent millions of hunters clearly states "the ecological cultural and economic importance of hunting to this region and the many decades of harmonious coexistence between firearm hunters and other recreationists on public lands throughout Michigan and across America."
- H.R. 4089 would require federal land managers to support and facilitate use and access for hunting, fishing and recreational shooting on Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land. This will prevent diversion of scarce conservation funds to answering nuisance lawsuits and costly paperwork and regulations that inhibit sporting activities.

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