

CONFIDENTIAL
LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2015

Bill Number: H.210 Name of Bill: An act relating to prohibiting the use of a gun silencer while hunting

Agency/Dept.: Fish & Wildlife Department Author of Bill Review: Daneil Pieterse

Date of Bill Review: 19/2/2015 Status of Bill (check one):

☒ Upon Introduction ☐ As passed by 1st body ☐ As passed by both bodies ☐ Fiscal

Recommended Position:

☒ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Remain Neutral ☐ Support with modifications identified in #8 below

Analysis of Bill

1. Summary of bill and issue it addresses. *Describe what the bill is intended to accomplish and why.*

This bill proposes to repeal the prohibition on the manufacture, sale, use, or possession of gun silencers, and proposes to prohibit a person from using or possessing a suppressor while hunting. The Bill defines a suppressor as a device attached to or part of the barrel of a firearm that reduces the amount of noise and visible muzzle flash generated by firing.

2. Is there a need for this bill? *Please explain why or why not.* Yes. Suppressors help to preserve the hearing of recreational shooters, hunters and hunting/service dogs. Although it can still be heard, suppressed gunfire helps mitigate noise complaints from those who live near shooting ranges and hunting land.

3. What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?

Impact will be minimal. Law enforcement would need to be informed of the regulation change.

4. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it? Minimal. Law enforcement would need to be informed of the regulation change.

5. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it? *(for example: public, municipalities, organizations, business, regulated entities, etc.)*

There is a misconception that Suppressors or "silencers" are silent, which is false. These devices are used to suppress sound, but does not eliminate it. The average gunshot is reduced by 20-35 decibels.

6. Other Stakeholders:

6.1 Who else is likely to support the proposal and why? Recreational shooters, hunters, the NRA, The American Suppressor Association, firearm and gunshop owners.

6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why? Members of the public that are not educated on how suppressors function and have concerns about the enforcement. Misinformed law enforcement officers and legislators. The reason for some of these misconceptions is that Hollywood for years has portrayed suppressors as being completely silent. Part of this problem is that the original patent for the device was for a firearm "silencer". Additionally federal law calls them "silencers". So there is an expectation that they make firearms "silent" when in reality, they are not.

7. Rationale for recommendation: *Justify recommendation stated above.* Most firearms and gunfire are loud. The average high-powered rifle unsuppressed fires at 160 decibels. The best sound suppressor will get the sound levels down to approximately 130 decibels. That level is roughly equal to the loudness of a chainsaw. Hunters do not use ear protection when they are out in the woods, because they need to hear their surroundings. The sound of gunfire can adversely affect the hearing of the user or nearby individuals. Suppressors will assist in mitigating hearing loss due to recreational shooting and hunting. Many waterfowl hunters make use of hunting dogs to retrieve their fowl, these animals are also being exposed to noise which can damage their hearing or effectiveness to keep retrieving fowl. Suppressors reduce recoil, and help decrease muzzle flinch. These benefits lead to improved accuracy, better shot placement, and more humane hunts. The occupational health and safety administration that have studied the effect of sound on hearing found that 140 decibels or less is roughly hearing safe. Suppressors prevent ringing, tinnitus and long-term damage to hearing.

8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill: *Not meant to rewrite bill, but rather, an opportunity to identify simple modifications that would change recommended position.*

Commissioner has reviewed this document:  Date: 4/10/15

Secretary has reviewed this document:  Date: 4-21-15