



July 28, 2021,

John Fischer-Legal Counsel
Department of Natural Resources
One Natural Resources
Springfield, IL 62702

Regarding: 17 IAC 650.20, .22, .30, .60, .66, .67: White-Tailed Deer Hunting By Use of Firearms & 17 IAC 660.20, .30, .60 : White-Tailed Deer Hunting By Use of Muzzleloading Rifle

Dear Mr. Fischer:

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully ask the Illinois DNR to support the proposed amendment to 17 IAC 650&660, regarding the definition of a muzzleloading rifle. By supporting this proposed amendment, which would authorize the use of the new FireStick technology during the state's muzzleloader hunting seasons, the Commission will allow Illinois' hunters to take advantage of this safe and easy-to-use technology while maintaining the fair chase ethic.

Since 1989, CSF has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the interests of America's hunters and anglers.

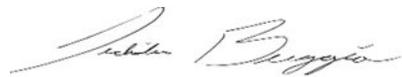
The FireStick muzzleloader technology is similar to most modern inline muzzleloader, which are legal to use in Illinois, in that a single projectile (bullet) is loaded through the muzzle for each discharge. The primary difference between the traditional/other/classic muzzleloaders and the FireStick is that, while most muzzleloaders also require the propellant (i.e., black powder or common substitute) to be loaded through the muzzle, the propellant used by FireStick-capable muzzleloaders can be safely loaded and unloaded through the breech which accepts unique, pre-charged capsules. While this is a deviation from the classic muzzleloader, this change in procedure

does not result in an increased effective range compared to modern inline muzzleloaders that are frequently used in the Prairie State.

While the FireStick technology does not result in any performance advantages, the platform is much simpler and safer to use. By utilizing pre-measured charges, similar to the use of pelleted black powder charges, hunters can expect improved precision at normal ranges relative to those using loose powder. Likewise, the ability to load and unload the powder charge from the breech end of the barrel allows hunters to safely remove the charge as needed while transporting the muzzleloader. Additionally, the casing in which the charge is held is protected from the elements, preventing moisture from inhibiting the ignition of the powder during adverse conditions. For youth hunters and those who are interested but have yet to try black powder hunting, these extra safety precautions may eliminate a potential barrier to entry while making this activity safer for all participants.

In conclusion, CSF would encourage the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to approve this change and authorize the use of this technology during the State's muzzleloader hunting seasons. Doing so would provide Illinois' hunters with additional opportunities in the field. Thank you all again for the ability to provide these comments to you, and please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nick Buggia".

Nick Buggia

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Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
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