



**To:**            **Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**  
Cross Building  
Room 206  
Augusta, ME

**Re:**            **LD 635 – An Act to Repeal the Requirement to Obtain a Permit**  
**Before Hunting with a Noise Suppression Device**

**Position:**    **Support**

**Date:**        **March 24, 2021**

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Honorable Members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife:

My name is Joseph Mullin and I am the Assistant Manager, Northeastern States for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF). I respectfully urge you to support LD 635 – legislation that would remove the need to acquire a permit from the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW) in order to hunt with a firearm suppressor, thus reducing barriers for sportsmen and women to protect their hunting partners, sporting dogs, and themselves from harmful hearing damage.

Since 1989, CSF has dedicated itself to the mission of working 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 conservation interests of America's hunters and anglers.

Suppressors are the hearing protection of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century sportsman and woman, and are engineered to reduce the sound signature of a gunshot to hearing safe levels. The primary purpose of these instruments is to protect the hearing of firearms-users and those in the immediate area, and they are quickly becoming a favored accessory of sportsmen and women throughout the nation. Despite common myths and misconceptions, suppressors do not “silence” host firearms. Suppressors work by trapping the expanding gasses at the muzzle of a firearm, allowing them to slowly cool, in a similar fashion to car mufflers. By decreasing the overall sound signature, suppressors help to preserve the hearing of recreational shooters, hunters, and hunting dogs around the world.

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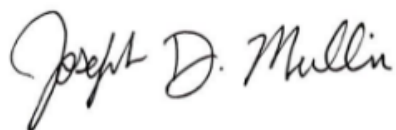
Suppressors are undoubtedly one of the most highly-regulated instruments in the United States, and the purchase process is far from expedient. As such, they are federally regulated under the National Firearms Act of 1934 and fall under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Prospective buyers must be residents of the United States, live in a state, such as Maine, where suppressor ownership is legal, and must be at least 21 years of age. Then, the hopeful-buyer will need to submit a Form 4 (an application for one suppressor stamp) to the ATF, as well as to the local chief law enforcement officer. This is in conjunction with sending a \$200 check and passport photo to the ATF, and undergoing a comprehensive Federal Bureau of Investigation background check and a National Instant Criminal Background Checks System check. In total, this process currently averages about seven months, though at certain points in time, the wait can extend beyond one year.

Despite the already exhaustive background check and permitting process all suppressor owners must go through in accordance with federal law, in Maine, sportsmen and women who wish to utilize their suppressors afield must currently clear yet another hurdle – submitting an application to the MDIFW in order to acquire an additional permit authorizing them to hunt with their suppressors. Of the 40 states that presently authorize suppressors to be used for hunting, Maine is the only state to require this additional step. The current process is cumbersome and inefficient for the hunters and is costly and time-consuming for the Department which must dedicate staff time and resources to reviewing and approving permit applications for something that is already highly regulated at the federal level.

By removing this unnecessary barrier, you will be increasing opportunities for sportsmen and women to utilize suppressors afield which will in-turn allow generations of hunters to prevent irreparable damage to their hearing. Generally, those opposed to the use of suppressors raise concerns of increases in poaching incidents. This position is largely based on the misconception that suppressors completely “silence” firearms. States that have recently legalized their use have seen no increase in poaching, which is largely due to the fact that suppressors are highly regulated devices, as mentioned above.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully urge the members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to support LD 635. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require any additional information on this, or any other sportsmen-related topic, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Joseph Mullin  
Assistant Manager, Northeastern States | Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation  
110 North Carolina Ave., SE | Washington, DC 20003  
[Jmullin@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:Jmullin@congressionalsportsmen.org) | 202-253-6883

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