The Vermont Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus was formed in February of 2006, was one of the first New England states to establish a Caucus, and was the 27th state to join the National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucuses (NASC). The original Co-Chairs of the Vermont Caucus were Representative Steve Adams and Representative Kathy LaBelle Lavoie. The bipartisan and bicameral leadership team for the 28 member Caucus is presently comprised of Senator Alice Nitka and Representative Patrick Brennan. The Vermont Caucus has done an exceptional job of coordinating their efforts with the Fish and Wildlife Department, the Governor’s office, and with the sportsmen’s community at large. Representative Brennan was the recipient of the 2012 NASC Heritage Award for the Northeast Region for his efforts in reenergizing the Caucus and promoting the coordination of efforts between and among the various stakeholders in Vermont to ensure that sportsmen’s interests were protected and advanced in Montpelier. Some of the many significant policy accomplishments of the Caucus include authorizing the ownership and possession of firearm suppressors, and being the first state in the Northeast region to successfully advance a Sportsmen’s Package. The Package included a suite of necessary administrative adjustments for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department that allow the agency greater flexibility in managing Vermont’s fish and wildlife and administering hunting and angling licenses. Additionally, the Act included provisions to: prohibit the importation and possession of feral hogs in Vermont; allow for the possession of handguns during archery season and while training dogs; grant authority to the Fish and Wildlife Board to regulate the use of crossbows during hunting seasons; and, allow landowners the opportunity to legally post their property so that hunting, fishing, and trapping would be allowed only by permission.

Policy Highlights

- Recently the Caucus has actively engaged on standard capacity magazine bills, hunting with suppressor bills, firearms waiting period and safe storage bills, and was instrumental in securing funding so that the Salisbury Fish Hatchery (responsible for 25% of the State’s brood stock) could remain operational.
- The Caucus has also been actively working against proposals to restructure the Fish and Wildlife Board which would diminish the voice of sportsmen and women in the rulemaking process on items concerning hunting, angling, and trapping.

Economic Impact and Conservation Funding

- Sportsmen and women spent $442 million on hunting and fishing in Vermont in 2011, which is ten times more than the revenues from maple products that year ($442 million vs. $40 million).
- Through the “user pays - public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding, Vermont sportsmen and women generated nearly $15 million for conservation last year alone.