

The purpose of Section 1 of the bill is to authorize a person to possess, use or carry a gun suppressor while hunting and specifically to protect the hearing of persons while hunting.

It is important to note that it is currently legal to possess suppressors for firearms in the state of Vermont. As part of the process to be allowed to possess a suppressor, a person is subject to a rigorous background check by the Federal Government and purchase of a tax stamp (\$205).

The Department spoke with the Department of Public Safety regarding the bill and they deferred to the recommendation of the Department of Fish & Wildlife.

Sec 1: The department agrees with the assertions contained there-in. We point out that, as noted in (6) the suppressors do not silence the noise of a gunshot but reduce the noise level. This is important for at least two reasons: first, an individual would not be silencing the sound of a gunshot in the event that they were attempting to take wildlife out of season or after hours; and second, it protects the hearing of hunters.

Hunters generally do not wear hearing protection because they would not be able to hear wildlife or other hunters in the woods. Additionally, putting hearing protection in when ready to shoot is not feasible as the movement would likely alert the quarry.

The Department's Warden service was consulted, and they support the authorization of possession of suppressors by hunters. As mentioned above, the possession of these items is currently authorized for Vermonters when not hunting. The concern of individuals using suppressors as a way to facilitate illegal taking is mitigated by the fact that suppressors do not 'silence' the report of a firearm.

In summary, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, including the Warden service which answers to the Commissioner, support the authorization of the use of suppressors by hunters due to the improved protection offered for their hearing.

Submitted,

Christopher Herrick