

Legislative Analysis



ALLOW THE USE OF RIFLES IN "SHOTGUN" ZONE

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House Bill 5249

Sponsor: Rep. Matt Lori

Committee: Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation

Complete to 5-14-12

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5249 AS INTRODUCED 1-17-12

The bill would amend Part 435 (Hunting and Fishing Licensing) of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow the use of certain specific rifles during any firearm deer season in the area that is currently restricted to only shotguns, muzzle-loaders, and certain types of pistols.

Specifically, the bill would allow individuals to use the following firearms in the *limited firearms area* during any firearm **deer** season:

- A shotgun with a smooth or rifled barrel.
- A .35 caliber or larger pistol that can hold up to nine shells at a time in the barrel and magazine combined and loaded with straight walled cartridges.
- A muzzle-loading rifle or black-powder rifle loaded with black powder or a commercially manufactured black powder substitute.
- A .35 caliber or larger rifle loaded with straight-walled cartridges that have a minimum case length of 1.16 and a maximum case length of 1.80 inches.

Under the bill, *limited firearms area* would be identical to the area currently designated as the "southern shotgun zone" (see map below).

MCL 324.43526

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 5249 would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the Department of Natural Resources. Under the provisions of the bill, areas of the state which lie within the limited firearms area would now be open to the use of certain specific rifles during the firearm deer season, whereas, under current law, the use of all rifles in these areas is prohibited.

According to the Department, the provisions of the bill may make firearm regulations harder to enforce in the part of the state below the current rifle/shotgun zone boundary since under current law, there is a clear prohibition against all rifles in these areas during the firearm deer hunting season. Under current law, only shotguns, muzzle loaders, and certain handguns may be used during the firearm deer season below the rifle/shotgun zone boundary line. Any additional enforcement costs to the DNR would be dependent

upon possible increased law enforcement activities under the bill's provisions and any additional complaints that conservation officers might be called upon to investigate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Michigan is divided into a northern rifle zone, where rifles may be used for firearm deer hunting, and a southern shotgun zone, where only shotguns, muzzleloaders, and certain handguns can be used. The zones are exclusive to firearm deer hunting and are depicted below.



(Adapted from the DNR's Hunting and Trapping and Rifle/Shotgun zones map)

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