

Legislative Analysis



ALLOW UNLOADED GUN IN VEHICLE AT SPORTING CLAYS RANGE

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House Bill 5322 with House committee amendment

Sponsor: Rep. Kurt Heise

Committee: Judiciary

First Analysis (5-4-12)

BRIEF SUMMARY: The bill would allow an unloaded gun to be transported in a vehicle on a sporting clays range.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill would have no fiscal impact to the State of Michigan or local units of government.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Sporting clays is a clay target game that is designed to simulate field shooting. Courses are generally laid out in natural surroundings with about five to ten shooting stations. Shooters move from one station to another to complete the course, with each station presenting shooters with a different type of shot. For instance, one station may have a target that duplicates the flight path a game bird would take when flushed and another one might present a target that is coming in towards the shooter like a duck when landing on a pond. (Information derived from claytargetsonline.com/aboutthegames.php)

Because of the amount of walking required by shooters at a sporting clays range, many elderly enthusiasts and others who have difficulty walking long distances or over uneven ground would like to use vehicles such as golf carts to move between the stations. Unfortunately, provisions of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protections Act make it illegal to transport a firearm in or upon a vehicle, even a golf cart, unless the gun is unloaded, broken down, and enclosed in a case. This would be too time-consuming at a busy shooting range. Instead, it has been suggested that the law be amended to allow the use of vehicles at sporting clay ranges to transport shooters, but only if their guns were unloaded.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow an individual to transport or possess an unloaded firearm in or upon a vehicle on a sporting clays range. The bill would also provide an exemption for an unloaded firearm transported on a vehicle at a sporting clays range from the prohibition against transporting a firearm on an ORV.

In general, the act prohibits the transport of a firearm in a vehicle unless the firearm is unloaded in both barrel and magazine and enclosed in a case, carried in the trunk, or

unloaded in a motorized boat. The act also prohibits the transport of a firearm in or on an ORV unless unloaded and securely encased, or equipped with and made inoperative by a manufactured keylocked trigger housing mechanism for transport.

MCL 324.40111 and 324.81133

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would make it lawful for an individual to carry his or her firearm - as long as it was unloaded - on a vehicle such as a golf cart or other type of ORV when moving between stations at a sporting clays range. This would give riders parity with walkers, who need only to unload their guns before leaving one station to go to another. The ability to utilize motorized carts between stations will enable skeet and trap shooters who have difficulty traversing the distance between stations or the uneven ground at sporting clays ranges to enjoy their sport longer.

POSITIONS:

The Department of Natural Resources indicated support for the bill. (5-3-12)

The Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) indicated support for the bills. (5-3-12)

The Michigan Gun Owners indicated support for the bill. (5-3-12)

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.