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*Senator Garrett Paul Mason*  
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**Testimony from Senator Garrett Mason  
in support of**

**LD 942, "An Act To Permit the Use of Firearm Noise Suppression Devices in  
Hunting and To Provide for a Chief Law Enforcement Officer's Certification  
for Certain Firearms"**

**Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**

**April 14, 2015**

Senator Davis, Representative Shaw and honored members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee: my name is Senator Garrett Mason and I represent District 22, which includes the communities of Litchfield, Wayne, Durham, Greene, Leeds, Lisbon, Sabattus, Turner and Wales. I am here to present to you LD 942, "An Act To Permit the Use of Firearm Noise Suppression Devices in Hunting and To Provide for a Chief Law Enforcement Officer's Certification for Certain Firearms."

If enacted, LD 942 would make the following changes to Maine law:

- Allow Maine sportsmen to utilize their legal sound suppressor equipment for the purposes of hunting
- Ensure that all Mainers that are legally permitted to own National Firearms Act (NFA) items such as sound suppressors, short barreled rifles and short barreled shotguns are able to do so by requiring Chief Law Enforcement Officers (CLEOs) to sign off on applications in a timely fashion
- Provide an appeals process for those who are denied the permit

Currently, Maine is one of thirty-nine states that allow the private ownership of sound suppressing devices. The process to purchase a suppressor is onerous and costly in both money and time; however, it provides many benefits to the shooter including recoil reduction, improved accuracy, and a reduction in sound to safer levels. This sound reduction makes the shooting experience safer for hunters and hunting dogs by reducing the likelihood of noise induced hearing loss.

A common misconception is that these devices silence the firearm to a degree that makes the shot completely undetectable. While this misconception is regularly portrayed in Hollywood, it simply isn't true. Suppressors reduce the noise of a gunshot

by about 20 to 25 decibels (dB), which is roughly the same sound reduction as earplugs or earmuffs. In fact, many who shoot multiple rounds during target practice with these devices still wear hearing protection.

As I am sure most of you know, especially those of you who hunt, firearms can be very loud, especially to the person who pulls the trigger. A single exposure to an unsuppressed gunshot can cause permanent hearing damage. Maine hunters who have gone through the extensive process to obtain a sound suppressor should be permitted to take these legally-owned devices into the woods with them, as hunters in thirty-five states across the country are permitted to do.

Additionally, firearm owners should be protected from the whims of those who are tasked with signing off on NFA forms. If you are permitted by law to purchase an item in Androscoggin County, or any county of the state, you should not be penalized simply because the CLEO in your district has a policy of not signing any NFA forms, regardless of the law, due to personal or political biases.

Finally, before you make your mind up on this legislation, I hope that you will all take advantage of the educational suppressor shoot being held on Tuesday, April 28th at the Capitol City Rifle and Pistol Club from 11 am to 2 pm to experience these devices first hand for yourselves.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.