



Buckeye Firearms Foundation

www.BuckeyeFirearms.org

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Proposal to Make Pistol Caliber Rifle Cartridges Legal for Deer Hunting in Ohio

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What is the proposal?

- Allow cartridges that are currently legal for handguns to also be used in rifles for deer hunting.
- These are straight-walled cartridges of .357 bullet diameter or larger. Typically, these are .357 Magnum, .44 Special, .44 Magnum, .45 Long Colt and similar cartridges. The Division of Wildlife maintains a more complete list.
- The rifles accepting these cartridges are commonly referred to as Pistol Caliber Rifles (PCR).
- The PCR would be allowed only during shotgun or pistol deer season, commonly referred to as "gun season," in Ohio. Currently these are the early special youth season and the deer gun season following Thanksgiving.
- The three-shot limit currently imposed on shotguns will also apply to PCR. Buckeye Firearms Foundation is working with the Division of Wildlife to define acceptable methods of limiting these firearms to three shots.
- A sunset provision is included to allow the Ohio Division of Wildlife to return to the current rules.
- These cartridges are **NOT** for high-powered rifles such as a .30-06 and the proposal does not include any cartridges normally considered as high-powered rifles.

Why allow PCR?

- The Ohio deer herd is healthy and the Division of Wildlife sees no adverse effects to the deer management program by allowing the use of PCR.
- Ohio deer hunters are asking for the ability to hunt with this type of firearm.
- This type of firearm is lighter than shotguns and muzzleloaders, making it ideal for youth, the physically impaired, or any hunter who wishes to carry less weight.
- The pistol cartridges are currently legal in handguns. They have been used for decades without incident.
- The pistol cartridges are actually less powerful than the newer shotguns with rifled barrels, inline muzzleloaders, and sabot bullet technology.
- This caliber rifle is popular in the sport of Cowboy Action Shooting. Many participants want to deer hunt with the rifle they shoot in competition.
- Because it is a rifle with a shoulder stock, it is easier to shoot more accurately than handguns.
- All states adjacent to Ohio allow PCR hunting for deer.
- Indiana moved to allow PCR for deer several years ago without reported problems.

The Facts

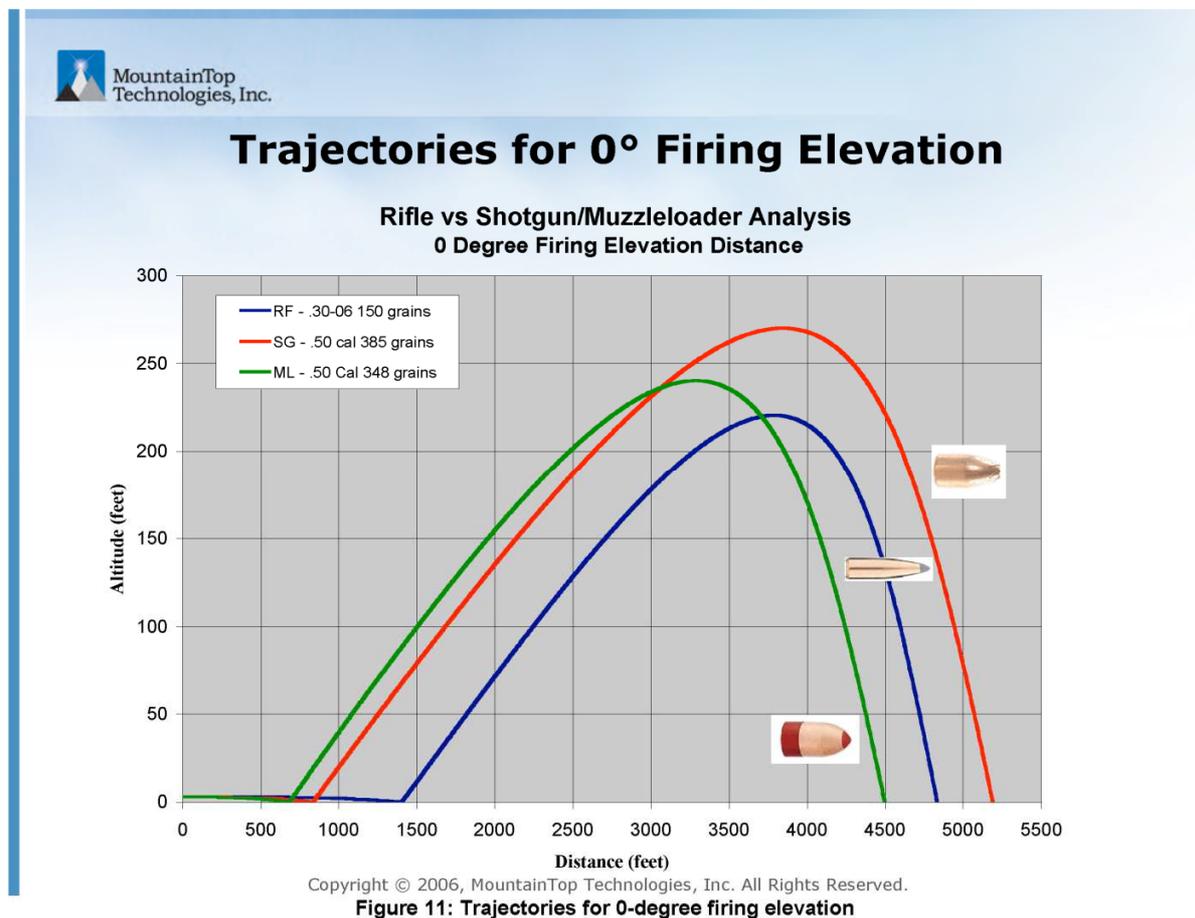
1) Are slug guns safer than rifles?

This is a popular misconception. Every state (PA, KY, WV, IN, MI) that borders Ohio permits the use of rifles for hunting deer.

2) Do rifles shoot farther than slug guns?

The short answer is “not necessarily.” Rifles chambered for straight-walled cartridges (i.e. .44 Mag; 45-70 Govt) are ballistically similar to factory shotgun slugs and sabots in terms of trajectory, velocity, and downrange energy.

A 2005 study commissioned by Pennsylvania House Resolution 61 titled “Do Shotguns and Muzzleloaders Pose Less Risk Than Centerfire Rifles for Hunting Deer in Pennsylvania?” concluded that under hunting conditions, slug guns actually had a longer trajectory when ricochets were taken into account. *See the graphic below.*



It should be noted that ballistics data for this study were provided by the U.S. Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC). ARDEC is the United States Government center of excellence for armament systems and munitions technologies.

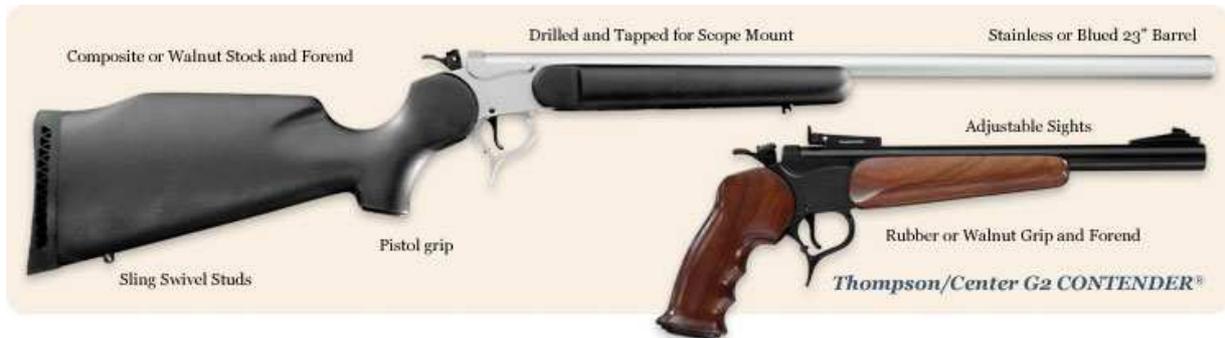
3) What cartridges are permitted by current Ohio Law?

Generally, Ohio law permits the use of any straight-walled (non-bottlenecked) cartridge using a bullet diameter greater than or equal to 0.357 inches (.38 caliber). This would exclude cartridges such as the .223 Remington, .30-30 Winchester, .30-06 Springfield, 7mm and .300 Magnums, .375 H&H, etc. Some examples of permitted cartridges would be the .357 and .44 Magnums, .375 Winchester, .444 Marlin, .45-70 Government, and .500 S&W along with the more traditional .410 bore, 20, 12 and 10 gauge slugs.

4) What types of firearms are currently permitted for hunting deer?

Generally, slug guns, muzzleloaders, and handguns with a minim barrel length of 5 inches are permitted. However, slug guns and muzzleloaders are the only permitted long guns. A hunter can use a handgun with a .45-70 Government cartridge such as a Thompson Center Encore pistol which utilizes a 15" barrel. However, add one inch of barrel length and a buttstock and this same setup is now illegal because it is in a "rifle" configuration by law.

The handgun in the photo below is legal for deer hunting in Ohio. The rifle, which shoots the same cartridge/bullet, is not legal for deer in Ohio. This really makes no sense as the ballistics are the same.



5) Is there personal liability by allowing a hunter to access and/or use property?

No. ORC 1533.181 provides immunity to property owners in these circumstances, and ODNR provides a land owner permission slip (<http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/Portals/9/pdf/DNR%208924.pdf>) that protects the property owner.

ORC, Title 15, 1533.181 Immunity.

(A) No owner, lessee, or occupant of premises:

(1) Owes any duty to a recreational user to keep the premises safe for entry or use;

(2) Extends any assurance to a recreational user, through the act of giving permission, that the premises are safe for entry or use;

(3) Assumes responsibility for or incurs liability for any injury to person or property caused by any act of a recreational user.

(B) Division (A) of this section applies to the owner, lessee, or occupant of privately owned, nonresidential premises, whether or not the premises are kept open for public use and whether or not the owner, lessee, or occupant denies entry to certain individuals.

Effective Date: 09-29-1995

6) How many hunting injuries/fatalities are there per year?

There are very few, considering the number of hunters in the woods. Incidents do occur statewide, however the vast majority of these are because hunters violate the rules of safe gun handling as taught in the Ohio Hunter Education course. Incidents are largely not so much a result of the type of hunting equipment used but the violation of basic safety rules (<http://www.ohiodnr.com/wildlife/dow/regulations/hunting.aspx>).

Example of a rifle built for PCR (bold added for emphasis):



Marlin Model 1894 from the Marline website: (<http://www.marlinfirearms.com>)

Built in the tradition of one of Marlin’s oldest lever-action designs, the Model 1894 is an elegant carbine chambered for pistol calibers. Its handy size is punctuated by a quick-pointing, straight-grip stock design and traditional Old West-styled adjustable semi-buckhorn sights. **The Model 1894 is chambered for 44 Remington Mag/44 Special.** Featuring finely checkered American black walnut stocks and fore-ends.

Model 1894 Cowboy

With their tapered octagon barrels, these rifles offer true cowboy-rifle heft and aesthetics for everyone from the die-hard Cowboy Action Shooter to the hunter who appreciates 19th century-style firearms. The Model 1894 Cowboy has a 20" barrel and is **chambered for 45 Long Colt, 44 Remington Mag/44 Special and 357 Mag/38 Special.** Also, featuring traditional Ballard-style rifling, handsome American black walnut stock and fore-end, and richly blued finish.

The photo below shows some common ammunition currently legal for deer hunting in Ohio. The three cartridges to the right are currently legal only in pistols. The proposed PCR would allow these same cartridges to be used in PCR such as the Marlin 1894 above.

Left to right: 12 gauge shotgun slug; 20 gauge shotgun and slug; 3 pellet Pyrodex load and two bullets commonly used in muzzleloaders; .357 magnum; .44 special and .44 magnum with bullet.

