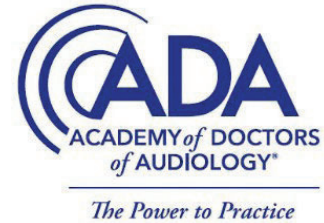


May 31, 2023

Representative Jeff Duncan
2229 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515



Senator Mike Crapo
239 Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative Duncan and Senator Crapo,

The Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA) supports evidence-based practices in the delivery of audio-vestibular care. Hearing protection and other hearing conservation tools, resources, and programs are fundamental for ensuring optimal hearing throughout one's lifetime.

As such, ADA supports the Hearing Protection Act (H.R. 152/S.401) to improve access to firearm noise suppressors, which are recommended by the National Hearing Conservation Association (NHCA)¹, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as a tool to prevent noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL).²

Millions of Americans of all ages routinely shoot firearms for sport. For example, nearly 7.5 million Americans hunt with a firearm each year, and an estimated 19 million Americans, six years of age and older, participate in firearms target shooting.³ Firearm users are at high risk of developing NIHL.⁴ Peak sound pressure levels (SPLs), from firearms, range from 130 to 175 decibels (dB).⁵ According to the CDC, loud noises, above 120 dB, can cause immediate, permanent harm to hearing.⁶

The use of conventional hearing protection (earplugs, earmuffs) is essential for preventing NIHL in firearm users. However, conventional hearing protection alone does not always offer adequate protection from noise exposure. Firearm noise suppressors can be an effective supplement to traditional hearing protection. Depending on the environmental conditions and the technical specifications of the firearm and ammunition, firearm noise suppressors can reduce noise levels at the shooter's ear by 7-32 dB.⁷ Importantly, using both conventional hearing protection and a firearm noise suppressor, concurrently, has been demonstrated to significantly reduce the risk of NIHL, compared with using either device alone.⁸

ADA is committed to advancing public policy initiatives related to hearing loss prevention and early intervention. Therefore, ADA endorses the Hearing Protection Act to provide improved access to firearm noise suppressors to support hearing conservation. Please contact us at sczuhajewski@audiologist.org for additional information.

Thank you,

Dawn Heiman, Au.D., President

Stephanie Czuhajewski, MPH, CAE, Executive Director

¹ <https://www.hearingconservation.org/assets/NHCA%20Hearing%20Protection%20Act%20with%20Encl%2020191028.pdf>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2013-0124-3208.pdf>

³ <https://huntingmark.com/hunting-statistics/>

⁴ <https://pubs.aip.org/asa/jasa/article/151/3/1769/2838222/Auditory-changes-following-firearm-noise-exposure>

⁵ See 1

⁶ https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hearing_loss/what_noises_cause_hearing_loss.html#:~:text=Sound%20is%20measured%20in%20decibels,immediate%20harm%20to%20your%20ears.

⁷ See 1

⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5634813/>