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January 27, 2006

The Honorable Robert J. L'Heureux
State Representative
94 Back River Rd.
Merrimack, NH 03054

RE: Amendment to HB1302

Dear Rep. L'Heureux:

May this find you well. I appreciated your return telephone call of Wednesday, January 25. I understand that your intent is to enable towns to prohibit target shooting on land owned by those towns. There are already laws on the books to ensure the safe use of firearms in Merrimack. The language in your draft amendment will enable towns to prohibit the carry and possession of firearms on all property owned by those towns as well as prohibiting target shooting. Property such as roads, parks, buildings, town forests and dumps would be off limits to those who lawfully possessed firearms.

When the current firearms pre-emption law was debated in 2003 this very issue was raised. In fact, language similar to your proposal was suggested and rejected. Representatives were reminded that the reason preemption was being proposed was because of the abuses of several towns such as Temple, Laconia and Salem in the area of firearms sales, ownership, use and possession. The purpose of R.S.A. 159:26 is to prevent a statewide patchwork of laws and regulations regarding firearms sale, ownership, use and possession. R.S.A. 159:26 accomplishes this by vesting the authority to regulate firearms with the State of New Hampshire. This protects the traveler from running afoul of the law when she crosses a town line. If your proposed amendment were to become law it will have the effect of repealing R.S.A. 159:26. **The New Hampshire Firearms Coalition is strongly opposed to this amendment.**

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It is important to remember article 2A of the New Hampshire Constitution, which states: "*All persons have the right to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves, their families, their property and the state.*" (December 1, 1982). There are no exceptions for towns to ban firearms.

It may also be of interest to you to learn that the Board of Trustees of Nashua Fish and Game Association recently voted unanimously to strongly oppose the proposed amendment HB1302.

Accordingly, I would like to request that you withdraw your proposed amendment to HB1302. We are categorically opposed to any amendment or bill which will provide cities and towns with the ability to prohibit target shooting, hunting or the otherwise lawful use and carry of firearms on public (taxpayer owned) property.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Alan M. Rice
Treasurer - New Hampshire Firearms Coalition, Inc.

CC: David Lavoie, President, Nashua Fish & Game Assn., Al Paul Lane, Merrimack, NH
The Honorable Peyton Hinkle
The Honorable Maureen Mooney