

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT R. WOODHOUSE
VICE-CHAIRMAN, ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION**

ON

H.R. 2100

TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PUBLIC LAND IN MOHAVE VALLEY, MOHAVE COUNTY, ARIZONA, ADMINISTERED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT TO THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT, FOR USE AS A PUBLIC SHOOTING RANGE

**BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2010
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I am Robbie Woodhouse, Vice-Chairman of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today regarding Congressman Trent Frank's H.R. 2100 which would provide the much needed land for the establishment of a public shooting facility in Mohave County, Arizona. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission supports H.R. 2100 and its committed goal of safe recreational shooting in Arizona.

Recreational shooting and sport hunting have always been a family-oriented outdoor activity in Arizona. As the population of the state continues to grow, the number of citizens engaging in recreational shooting at formal and informal shooting ranges or dispersed shooting areas has increased significantly. The population of Arizona has more than doubled from 2.5 million in 1997 to over six million today. Studies show that 20% of Arizona residents participate in recreational shooting activities. Outdoor recreationists with multiple interests are competing to use public lands adjacent to large metropolitan areas, as well as expanding rural communities. As a result of this increased use, unresolved conflicts have arisen between public agencies, landowners, recreational shooters and other recreationists. There are population centers in Arizona that currently do not have reasonable access to a public shooting range. As a result, the impact of dispersed shooting and associated issues such as littering, shared use of increasingly scarce public lands and resource damage continue to represent challenges.

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission (Commission) promotes and supports the development of safe, accessible target and sport-shooting facilities by taking a leadership role in partnering with ranges, industry, and communities. Additionally, the Commission provides statewide range development assistance through a variety of technical, educational and financial resources consistent with its goal to preserve shooting opportunities for present and future generations.

The Commission currently owns and operates five shooting ranges in Arizona and has supported countless others through development grants, and technical and engineering support. The Commission is committed to its continued support for shooting range development in Arizona.

With the major population increase in the tri-state (Arizona, Nevada and California) area, members of the sport shooting community have expressed a strong interest in developing a new multi-purpose shooting facility to replace the one that was closed in 1998 due in large part to encroachment. At present, due to the lack of a formal shooting facility, shooters have been forced to utilize makeshift shooting locations which, has become a significant source of concern for public and private landowners, as well as, other outdoor recreationists. H.R. 2100 would help mitigate these issues.

To accommodate the needs of the shooting community including various shooting disciplines, hunter education and law enforcement training needs, the Commission proposed the development of a formal shooting complex in the Tri-State area. The complex would include various rifle, pistol and shotgun ranges, a hunter education range and a law enforcement training area.

Since the closure of the only public shooting range in the area, the Commission has worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the local shooting community for the past 12 years to identify a new site for a range. The Commission is encouraged by the BLM's recently issued Record of Decision (ROD) authorizing the range, however; questions remain regarding some of the stipulations included. The main questions are the range foot print, noise monitoring and future range expansion. The Commission looks forward to working with the BLM to address these concerns. H.R. 2100 would address these issues and expedite the development process. If this legislation is passed, the Commission has the financial resources available to begin range development immediately.

The Commission supports the proposed legislation by Congressman Franks, regarding the conveyance of the identified BLM lands to the Commission for the development of the Tri-State Shooting range. If the proposed legislation is passed the Commission would continue to work with all interested parties to develop the range in the most professional manner possible incorporating environmental management, noise abatement and cultural considerations.

Again, on behalf of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission I would like to thank you for the opportunity to address your committee in support of Congressman Franks' H.R. 2100. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.