

Support HR 1558 – The Computer-Assisted Remote Hunting Act

The Computer-Assisted Remote Hunting Act, introduced by Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA) as **H.R. 1558**, seeks to restrict the availability of Internet hunting. The legislation is narrow in scope and would not impact any other type of hunting activity.

Internet hunting, also called remote controlled hunting, utilizes Internet technology to allow a computer user to aim and fire a weapon that is mounted on a mechanized tri-pod at a remote location. Live-Shot.com, owned and operated by an entrepreneur in San Antonio, Texas, offered Internet hunts until the practice was outlawed in the state on June 20, 2005. Unfortunately, a majority of states do not prohibit Internet hunting; therefore, federal legislation banning this practice is crucial to prevent the start-up of similar operations across the country.

Internet hunts work like this: The prospective web “hunter” signs up through a web site, and pays a user fee and a deposit for the animal that he or she wishes to kill. The animal purchased is lured to a feeding station within range of the rifle. When the target approaches the food, the Internet hunter uses his or her mouse to line up the animal in the on-screen crosshairs. A click of the mouse fires the rifle. Trophy mounts are prepared at the ranch and shipped to the customer.

This desk-top killing amounts to a video monitored slaughter. None of the tenets of fair chase or sportsmanship applies. According to Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of **The Humane Society of the United States**:

“Hunting over the Internet is an appalling application of technology, and it is critical that federal lawmakers step in to halt the use of the Internet for this perverse form of animal cruelty. It is pay-per-view slaughter, and it has no resemblance to traditional forms of hunting.”

The nation’s leading hunting groups have also weighed in against Internet hunting. Kelly Hobbs of the **National Rifle Association** states:

“The NRA has always maintained that fair chase, being in the field with your firearm or bow, is an important element of hunting tradition. Sitting at your desk in front of your computer, clicking at a mouse, has nothing to do with hunting.”

Safari Club International agrees that Internet hunting “ . . . doesn’t meet any fair chase criteria.”

Alabama, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, and South Carolina legislatures have introduced legislation to outlaw Internet hunting. Thirteen states – California, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin – have already enacted bans.

Nevertheless, the interstate and international nature of this activity necessitates federal legislation to put an end to Internet hunting.