

Gun owners load up on rifle ammo after proposed ban

By Megan Spicer

FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF WRITER

Triune Shooting Sports in Warrenton can't keep boxes of 5.56mm/.223-caliber green tip ammunition on the shelves.

A run on the popular ammunition began after the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives announced proposed rules to ban their use by civilians.

"What this is going to cause is a shortage for this ammo for people who want to or need to use it for sporting," said Jimmy Czarda, an employee at Triune. Czarda said the store is almost sold out "because people are panicking."

"There's no real reason to put a ban on [the ammo]," Czarda said.

According to the ATF, the ban is being sought because the ammunition in question is "armor piercing."

Currently, ammunition that is "armor piercing," or can penetrate an officer's protective vest, is banned.

However, the Gun Control Act of 1968 carves out an exemption if "the Attorney General determines that the specific ammunition at issue is 'primarily intended to be used for sporting purposes,'" according to the proposed ban.

The ATF has a "framework" that outlines which ammunition falls under the exemption, meeting the goal "of protecting law enforcement while respecting the interests of sportsmen and the industry."

According to the proposal, "ammunition capable of penetrating body armor was originally designed and manufactured primarily for military and law enforcement applications, not for use by the general public."

By the 1970s, however, law enforcement agencies started to take notice that the "armor pierc-



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTO/RANDY LITZINGER

Dave Pumphrey readies his AR-15 semi automatic before sighting it in at the Phelps Sighting Range.

ing" ammunition was available for the general public and "posed extreme safety risks to police officers when used by criminals."

Czarda, however, believes the proposed ban is being put forward to be used against the gun community.

Over at Warrenton Arms & Outdoors, Andy Gilliam said the store won't "get into the mode of let's buy 5.56 ammo."

"We started exploring it about a week ago and decided to hold tight," Gilliam said. "One wholesaler said hold tight, it will blow over."

For now, the store will be in a "holding pattern," Gilliam said, and if "people want to stock up on green tip ammo for no reason, go ahead."

The ammunition can be used in bolt action rifles as well as the AR-15.

"It's not just an assault weapon ammo," Gilliam said.

Gilliam said the proposed banning of this particular ammunition is "somewhat concerning."

"It seems painted with a broad brush because it's not a product that's been abused in the past and

it's kind of a misguided knee-jerk reaction to social issues," Gilliam said.

Gilliam said he hears a lot of gun owner's opinions in the store, but tries not get too involved.

"Is the armor piercing ammo critical to have? No," Gilliam said. "Is it a right that American can have it? Yeah. Is it abused by Americans? I don't think so. So what is driving the government to ban this, I don't know."

The ATF is currently seeking public comment on the ban until March 16.

Comments can be submitted in the following ways:

ATF email: APAComments@atf.gov.

Fax: (202) 648-9741

Mail: Denise Brown, Mailstop 6N-602, Office of Regulatory Affairs, Enforcement

Programs and Services, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, 99

New York Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20226: ATTN: AP Ammo Comments

Email the reporter: mspicer@virginianewsgroup.com

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