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SPORTING ARMS AND AMMUNITION MANUFACTURERS' INSTITUTE, INC.

Since 1926

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# **Market Size and Economic Impact of the Sporting Firearms and Ammunition Industry in America**

**(2004 Revised Edition)**

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*Background Paper #2*

## Overall Impact

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Economic impact surveys by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the International Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (Southwick Associates), the National Shooting Sports Foundation and others indicate that the hunting and shooting sports market generates in excess of \$36.4 billion of economic activity annually. This activity supports more than one million jobs. These one million jobs account for less than 1 percent of all U.S. employment, but represent more people than are employed in Wyoming and West Virginia combined. More people are “employed by the shooting sports” than work in cities such as San Francisco, Kansas City, Portland, Orlando or Fort Worth.

According to Fortune magazine, “The dollars spent by hunters pack special oomph, because they hit small towns far off the interstate. There, merchants look to hunting season the way Macy’s looks to Christmas: it can make or break the year.”

According to the National Sporting Goods Association, there are 42.6 million hunters and recreational target shooters in the nation. These sportsmen and women spend some \$6.4 billion annually on equipment, including firearms, ammunition, bows, arrows, clothing, reloading equipment, optics and accessories. Hunters and target shooters spend an additional \$5.3 billion on trip-related expenses annually.

There are more than 1,100 manufacturers, 100 distributors and 14,000 retailers in the United States whose business is totally or largely dependent on the hunting and recreational shooting market, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

## In Perspective

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The following comparisons are provided to help put in perspective the economic significance of the sporting firearms and ammunition industries and related activities.

- ❖ In the few minutes it takes to review this report, the nation's hunters and shooters will generate enough economic activity to support eight jobs.
- ❖ Each day, the firearms and ammunition industry, and related hunting and shooting activities, generate enough economic activity to support 1,640 jobs.
- ❖ Hunting- and shooting-related industries employ more people than all Sears stores.
- ❖ The \$36.4 billion in economic activity generated by the hunting and shooting sports industries exceeds the annual sales of companies such as Coca-Cola, Anheuser Busch, McDonald's, Home Depot, Johnson & Johnson, Caterpillar Tractor, Goodyear Tire & Rubber, Hewlett Packard, RJR Nabisco and scores of other highly recognizable "Fortune 500" companies.
- ❖ The blockbuster movie "Titanic" grossed \$376 million in 9 weeks. The hunting and shooting sports generate that much in just 4 days.
- ❖ The entire motion picture industry gross revenue from theater admissions is about \$5 billion, annually. The firearms and ammunition industry and related activities generate that much in two months.

- ❖ More than 25 million Americans participated in shotgun, handgun and rifle target shooting activities in 1996. That's more than three times as many people who played racquetball during the same period, more than twice as many as take part in water skiing, and is roughly the same number of people who played golf.
- ❖ Hunting and target shooting activity employ more people than Chrysler, Phillip Morris, United Parcel Service and Ford combined.

## **Multiplier Effect**

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None of the economic data included in this report takes into consideration the “multiplier effect” of this economic activity on the overall economy. Based on data provided by Southwick Associates, if the multiplier effect was taken into consideration, the overall impact on the economy of hunting and shooting sports activity would be in excess of \$67 billion, annually.

## **Impact on Wildlife Conservation**

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The sporting firearms and ammunition industry proposed, and actively supported, enactment of an 11 percent excise tax on sporting long arms and ammunition to fund wildlife conservation programs. These taxes currently raise in excess of \$180 million dollars annually for wildlife management and habitat acquisition and improvement programs. More than \$4 billion has been raised for conservation since these taxes were enacted.

## Summary

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The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute does not maintain that hunting, recreational shooting or the purchase of firearms for personal or home protection are acceptable or desirable activities merely because they make a significant contribution to our national and local economies. These activities are an acceptable, responsible and desirable ingredient of our nation's heritage. They should be continued because experience, statistical evidence and common sense tell us so. The economic impact of these activities must be considered when often well-meaning, but less than fully informed individuals suggest that America would be a better place without hunting, recreational shooting or the right of self-protection merely because those individuals possess a personal antipathy or apathy toward these activities.

## Membership

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The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute is an association of the nation's leading manufacturers of sporting firearms, ammunition and components. Founded in 1926 at the request of the federal government, SAAMI has been actively involved in the publication of industry standards, coordination of technical data and the promotion of safe and responsible firearms use. SAAMI currently publishes more than 700 standards related to firearm and ammunition quality and safety. For a listing of SAAMI members, please write to:

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