

From: Andrew Ault  
North Pole, AK

To: Alaska Board of Game

Comments concerning Proposal 129- require the use of expanding (soft point) bullets for big game hunting.

I am not in favor of Proposal 129. While there is a definite need to address issues surrounding bullet, cartridge, and firearm selection when hunting; this proposal as written will create dangerous situations that will result in an increase in injuries and/or death for people while hunting. I base this claim on my various experiences over the past 30 years while primarily hunting bears and moose in Alaska.

Solid bullets in hunting firearms, typically in the larger bore and more powerful firearms, have been used for years to hunt dangerous game. While most people associate dangerous game with the "big 5" in Africa, here in Alaska a large grizzly, coastal brown bear, Kodiak bear, and Bison can and should be considered dangerous game. A very effective, and highly recommended approach to hunting dangerous game is to take an initial shot carefully aimed at vitals with an expanding bullet and to make follow up shots with solid bullets. The thinking behind this is that if the animal does not immediately go down, it will be extremely hard to place good shots in "soft areas" while the animal is thrashing about and/or charging you. Solids ensure maximum penetration through both bone and flesh when situations call upon the need.

The Proposal does not allow for the use of engineered bullets, such as those from Lehigh Defense. The Xtreme Penetrator Fluid Transfer Monolithic bullet is designed to penetrate deeply while redirecting the disrupted body fluids. This redirection of fluids can create a permanent wound cavity larger than traditional expanding bullets, while simultaneously creating a deeper wound cavity.

High quality shotgun slugs used for bear protection and/or to finish off wounded game hiding in the pucker brush are not expanding projectiles. While hunting slugs designed to expand do exist, most require the use of a long rifled barrel to properly stabilize their flight. For years I have used the most powerful slugs available in my shotgun while tracking and dispatching wounded animals, they are a very hard alloy lead that does not expand.

Will expanding bullets also be required in defensive handguns while in bear country? Currently if a person has a hunting license and must shoot a charging bear with a handgun they have a choice of harvesting the animal or turning it over after taking in defense of life or property. Expanding bullets are the worst bullet choice for use in defensive handguns against both charging bears and moose, hard bullets designed to deeply penetrate are needed in these situations as the handguns commonly carried while enjoying the outdoors have only a fraction of the muzzle energy of typical hunting rifles.

As I stated before, there is a need to address proper bullet, cartridge, and firearm selection when hunting. This might be best done through new regulations, including informative information in the hunting regulations booklets, in hunter's education courses, or through a combination of these.

I am assuming that there has been a growing problem with people taking the popular AR-15 hunting in Alaska. The .223 round is inexpensive, especially when purchased in a 55 grain FMJ bullet; this round is also widely available, but not very effective on making quick kills on the larger big game found in Alaska. A few other states have various cartridge and ammunition requirements when hunting big game, most require a minimum .24 caliber. Wyoming requires .35 caliber in a cartridge at least 1.5" in length or capable of at least 500 ft/lb of energy at 100 yards when hunting big and trophy game. It might be time to both reclassify game in Alaska and institute minimum caliber, bullet weight, and muzzle energy requirements for small, medium, and big game.

Thank you,

Andrew Ault