



# TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23<sup>RD</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

**From:** Senator Terry Moulton

**To:** Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry

**Re:** Testimony on Senate Bill 551  
**Relating to:** hunting with a high-powered air rifle or an airbow and providing a criminal penalty.

**Date:** February 14, 2018

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 551, which allows for the use of a high-powered air rifle or an airbow during the firearm hunting season.

Air rifles and air bows are different from your typical firearm or crossbow. Instead of relying on a chemical reaction or the elasticity of a bowstring, these weapons rely on compressed air to fire the arrow or pellet.

Air powered weapons have been around for centuries. Back in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, air guns were often used to hunt deer and wild boar. The air was stored in the butt of the gun and you had to use a hand pump to fill it with air. Meriwether Lewis, of the famous duo Lewis and Clark, bought an air gun to use on their expedition.

Technology has come a long way since then. Air rifles have become easier to operate and accuracy has increased significantly. These rifles are often used on gun ranges, hunting in some states, shooting competitions and even in the Olympics.

The air bow makes it easier for hunters who have limited mobility or strength to load their weapon compared to pulling back a crossbow or bow. Both the air rifle and air bow are quiet, which provides the hunter with the chance for a second shot if the animal has not been spooked. However, using air guns to hunt anything except small game or using an airbow is not allowed in our state.

Senate Bill 551 simply adds a few new options for hunting during the firearm season. Under this bill, if the Department of Natural Resources opens a season where a firearm can be used for hunting animals, they must also allow for the use of an air rifle or airbow for hunting during that season as well. The amendment to the bill gives the DNR additional authority over the specifics of the weapon based on the effectiveness for hunting. This bill does not authorize the use of an air rifle or airbow during the archery season.

This bill is supported by the Safari Club and no one is registered against it. Other states that have legalized the use of air guns for hunting whitetail deer and other animals are Alabama, Arizona, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Vermont and Virginia.

Air rifles and airbows are a great addition to the weapons hunters can choose from for their hunting experience. Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 551. Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.

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*Serving the 23rd Senate District*



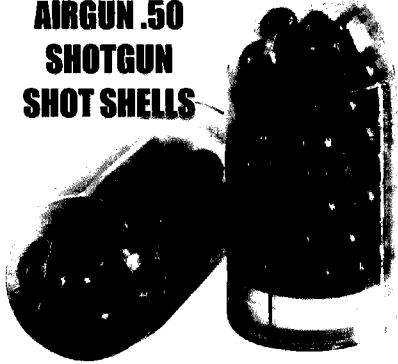
www.airgunsarp.com

<https://tinyurl.com/wiairguns>

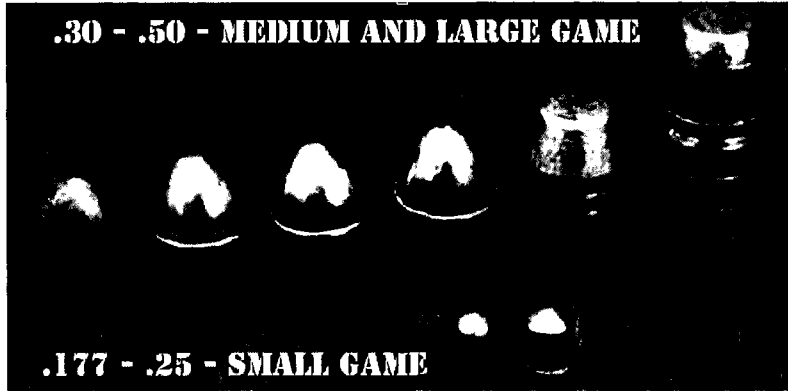
## Airgun Ammo Types and Sizes

Airguns have always been effective tools for the taking of game. Wisconsin has allowed airguns for small game hunting for some time, but has only scratched the surface on the potential of these tools. Today's High powered Pre Charged Pneumatic airguns are available in sizes up to .50 Caliber, and with a variety of projectile choices including round ball, shot shell and arrows.

**AIRGUN .50  
SHOTGUN  
SHOT SHELLS**



**.30 - .50 - MEDIUM AND LARGE GAME**



**.177 - .25 - SMALL GAME**



The technology is not new. Big Bore (.30 Caliber and larger) airguns have been used for hunting boar, deer and other medium and large sized game since the 1700s. The Lewis and Clarke expedition used big bore air rifles as both a hunting tool as well as for protection. Today's technological advancements give us more options when it comes to hunting options with air rifles, but the foundational technology is tried and true with a deep and rich history.



[www.airgunsarp.com](http://www.airgunsarp.com)

<https://tinyurl.com/wiairguns>

States that allow high powered air guns (pre-charged pneumatic weapons)

Alabama - "Air powered guns, .30 caliber or larger."

<http://www.outdooralabama.com/legal-methods-hunting>

Michigan

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/hunting\\_and\\_trapping\\_digest\\_461177\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/hunting_and_trapping_digest_461177_7.pdf)

Missouri

<https://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/deer/deer-seasons-hours>

Arizona

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/azgfd-portal-wordpress/azgfd/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/28135605/mainregs.pdf>

## Big Bore Pre-Charged Pneumatic Weapon Hunting Examples

Videos with Jim Chapman, one of the premiere Airgun Hunting experts:

Hog Hunting with Airbolt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZH3FBOQK6oY>

White Tail Deer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EJ86YXkspY>

Keith Warren on hunting with a .50 Cal PCP airgun

White Tail Deer in Canada (18 minute mark): <https://youtu.be/ti5F65ALB3I>

Other Hunting Videos

.357 Big Bore Airgun Whitetail hunt: <https://youtu.be/Qx2u2cqCoK4>

Prepared by

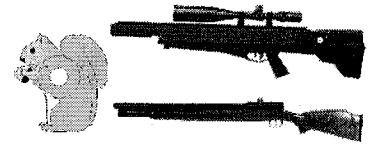
Tony Roman -

[www.AirgunsARP.com](http://www.AirgunsARP.com)

[airgunsarp@gmail.com](mailto:airgunsarp@gmail.com)

(608) 719-9619

[www.airgunsarp.com](http://www.airgunsarp.com) / [www.facebook.com/airgunsarp](https://www.facebook.com/airgunsarp)



From: Alex Modic, President - BAGA  
To: Senate Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry Committee  
Re: Testimony on Assembly Bill 649/Senate Bill 551  
Date: February 14, 2018

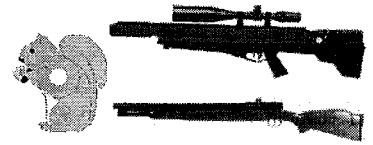
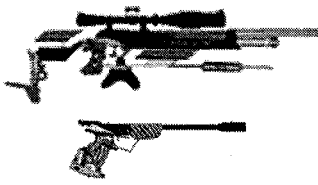
Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony about Assembly Bill 649 and Senate Bill 551, which allows for the use of a high-powered air rifle or an 'airbow' during the large game firearm hunting season.

I am the President and Owner of the largest airgun club in Wisconsin, Badgerland AirGun Association (BAGA). We are an enthusiast group and have our ranges located at the Conservation Club of Kenosha County (CCKC) Bristol Shooting Ranges, one of the largest all-encompassing shooting ranges in the state. I began this club in the early '90s and we have had a strong and most importantly, a growing membership. We hold weekly open range times and have many competitions during the year, both indoors and outdoors - on our 100 yard sight-in range as well as our 20-lane Field Target course in the woods of CCKC.

I want to testify that our club and its membership, wholeheartedly support this Bill to allow hunting with high-powered air arms. In the past 10-15 years I have seen the sport grow in interest and membership, both for target shooting as well as hunting of small game. Within the last 5 years, the industry has developed and improved the technology by leaps and bounds, allowing these air arms to excel not only in accuracy but in power as well. No longer are the air rifles only designed for small calibers (.177, .22 & .25), but there has been a great deal of development in large bore and high-powered guns (.30 - .50 caliber, up to 700 ft-lbs). In addition, the increase in bore size has allowed for introduction to shooting specially designed bolts (arrows) from these same barreled airguns. Several states already have approved these high powered rifles for their large animal hunting season.

As Wisconsin is a deer hunter's paradise, it would make total sense that we also become leaders in the airgun hunting game and establish effective and defined rules for hunting with these new airguns. While the technology has been here for a while, with airguns reaching high powered ballistics to allow taking of large game, it also is increasing and continues to develop with more attainable models. Just at this year's Shot Show, several new large bore and high-powered air guns were introduced that perform extremely well at affordable pricing.

I can attest that at our club, we have shooters from all walks of life and the age spread is unbelievable. Just last week we had on our firing line a 12 year old with his dad, and 80 year old scoring the best hunter target of the entire group and a young mother, the daughter of one of our ROs, also shooting her best score, while still spending time with her dad. This is the environment that airguns allow on a regular basis, shooting air arms and competing and yet it is not gender or age defining. The quietness and ease of recoil, allows for those that would not be enthusiastic about firing a powder burner, to still enjoy the shooting sports. For this reason, I also feel



that allowing air arms for large game hunting, will also allow for families to effectively spend time together doing what I feel is in Wisconsin, a 'right-of-passage' and hunt together in our rich woods.

I do want to add, that while many in our club, as well as existing airgun enthusiasts, are very informed on the capabilities as well as the limitations of the new air weaponry, the general public has not fully been exposed to all of the recent technological advances, as it has been a coming at such a high pace it is even overwhelming the general sports industry. I certainly would not condone a simple 1000 FPS rated gun as it does not offer any real definition for takedown power and there are many other simpler factors, which the DNR can use to construct a better set of rules. For this reason, I would want to be sure that the DNR is given a good opportunity to learn the capabilities and see the viable offerings of this new high-powered airgun format.

I would offer for anyone interested in learning, or actually experiencing what these high-powered airguns can do, to come and join us at our club. We have at our club available several different high-power large bore rifles and several different types of air bow rifles as well. I would also offer to further discuss these air arms with all those looking to establish rules for their hunting use.

I have also attached a recent article from Airgun Hobbyist - Airguns Afield, with the Editors permission, to show you a very recent story about hunting with airguns. And while this event did not take place in Wisconsin, the beginnings of this hunter's airgun venture did occur in state of Wisconsin, with a purchase he made at Scheels. It's a good article that also exhibits a father and daughter hunting experience. My personal story is that I started both my son and daughter shooting airguns when they were 7 years old, took them on a hunt as companions when they were 10 and their first firearm mentored hunts when they were 12.

I want to thank the committee for reviewing my testimony and allowing me to submit this information. There is a large airgun following of enthusiast in Wisconsin and several of my counterparts from varying positions in the sport have also presented at the Legislative Hearing for AB649. I hope that their testimony will also be received in the same supportive manner as mine as there is more technical in nature. We have spent a lot of time and energy to make this a team approach and effort. We are all in combined agreement and support this bill, with a request to be ensured that the rules are finalized with appropriate knowledge and consideration.

Sincerely Submitted by

*Alex Modic*

President-Owner  
Badgerland AirGun Association  
CCKC/Bristol Ranges  
(262) 895-7251  
[alex@bagaclub.com](mailto:alex@bagaclub.com)

<http://bagaclub.com> <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1767943756812007/> <http://bristolranges.com>

Badgerland AirGun Association  
Bristol, WI  
At the CCKC Bristol Shooting Ranges

# Airgun Hobbyist

America's Airgun Magazine

*Airguns  
Afield*

Vol. 8 No. 1 Jan, Feb, March 2018

\$9.99 USD



81 >

# Meet Eric Henderson of Adventure's Afield

by Airgun Hobbyist

Over the years, Eric Henderson has bagged a number of native and exotic game across the United State and Africa using big bore airguns. We had the opportunity to chat to him about his life and would like to share it with you.

**AH:** "Could you tell us a little about yourself?"

**EH:** "I am a proud husband and a father of a wonderful wife and daughter. I'm also Desert Storm veteran as I was in the Air Force as a jet engine mechanic. I love the outdoors. I own a paintless dent repair business on top of Adventure's Afield."

**AH:** "What was your first airgun?"

**EH:** "It was a Daisy Red Ryder. I pretty much wore that thing out. I would make an old west town out of cardboard and make small bad guys. I'd be the 'hero' taking them out with my BB gun. That's what kids do."

**AH:** "Did your dad teach you to hunt?"

**EH:** "My dad taught me to hunt at a very young age. He also taught a hunter safety class which I would go along with them every year and participate. We did a lot of camping, trapping and fishing. Probably more fishing, and trapping than hunting."

**AH:** "How long have you been into big bore airguns?"

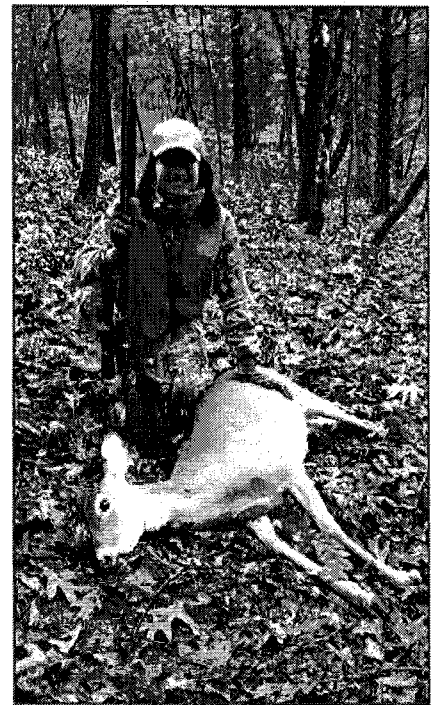
**EH:** "I got into big bore airguns back in 1999. It was a single shot Career 9 mm

Korean gun. I was working in Wisconsin and bought it from a store called Scheels. A few months later I met Dennis Quackenbush at an airgun show in Minnesota. That's when I bought my first powerful big bore."

**AH:** "You are one of the pioneers of hunting with modern big bore airguns?"

**EH:** "I am not the very first person to shoot a big game with an airgun, but I am the one that brought it mainstream. I have three DVDs dedicated to big bore airgun hunting from 12 years ago. Back then I was being told by people that I shouldn't be doing this. I popularized it through the videos showing how it can be done. It's not a stunt. Anyone can do the same thing with proper preparation."

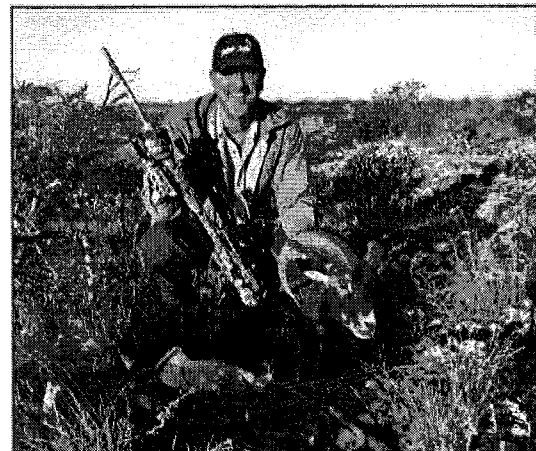
Eric's daughter has been hunting with him for years.



Eric shot this buck with AirForce Airguns Texan.

**AH:** "Do others in your family hunt or shoot airguns?"

**EH:** "My brother in Kansas hunts but not as much as I do. I've been taking my daughter hunting with airguns for four years now. She has shot three Whitetail deer with a Quackenbush airgun at the Quackenbush farm in Missouri where it is legal. This is our favorite time together. I wouldn't have it any other way. She enjoys the outdoors as much as I do. I'm proud of her."



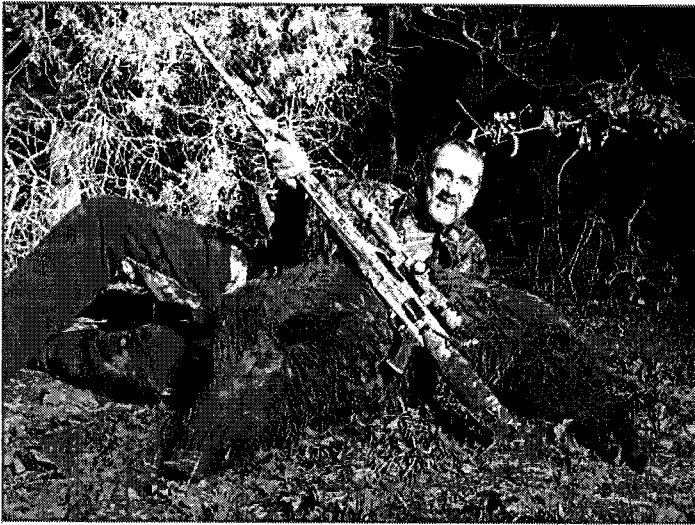
This ram was taken at 175 yards.

**AH:** "Do you have a favorite animal to hunt?"

**EH:** "It would be a combination of pigs and exotics. You can hunt those year-round here in Texas. Some of the pigs I've killed were served at my 'LASSO' shoot. I love to share what I shoot."

**AH:** "What is the biggest animal you've hunted with an airgun?"

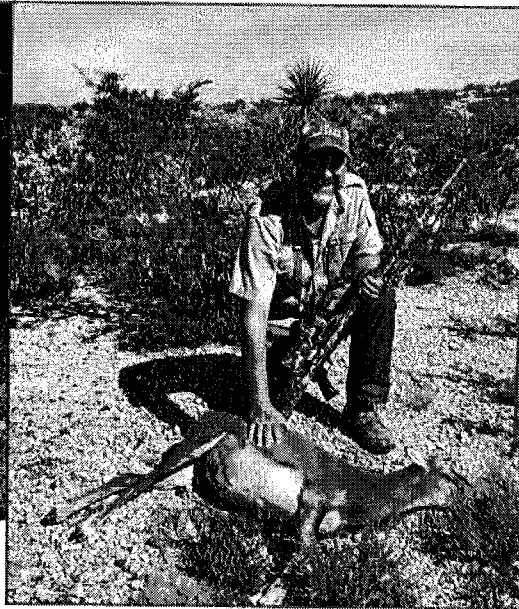
**EH:** "The biggest animal so far is either my elk I killed in central Texas or the kudu I took while I was in South Africa airgun hunting. I've also filmed two bison airgun hunts. One in Wyoming and the other one in Texas."



*A successful night hog hunt.*

**AH:** "What is the furthest shot you've taken on a large animal with your airgun."

**EH:** "So far my furthest kill has been 198 yards on a Mouflan ewe with my 45 caliber Air Force Texan (which is on my YouTube channel). My first long-range kill was 118 yard head shot on a pig. I have been shooting all that day and I knew the drop of the bullet perfectly. I don't have a problem taking long-range shots as long as I know I can make an ethical kill."



*Record setting kill shot on video: A Mouflan ewe taken at 198 yards.*



*Eric Henderson*

**AH:** "Could you tell us about your web site and Youtube channel?"

**EH:** "My website is [adventuresafield.com](http://adventuresafield.com) and my YouTube channel is Eric Henderson/adventures afield. Adventures afield isn't just hunting, it's pretty much everything outdoors, right now it is mostly airgun hunting, but I plan on adding more later on. I have over 30 videos on that channel."