

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

FILE NUMBER: H.F. 42

DATE: March 9, 2005

Version: Second Engrossment

Authors: Howes, and others

Subject: Firearms, Natural Resources

Analyst: Jim Cleary

This publication can be made available in alternative formats upon request. Please call 651-296-6753 (voice); or the Minnesota State Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TTY) for assistance. Summaries are also available on our website at: www.house.mn/hrd.

Overview

This bill authorizes the use of firearm silencers by public agencies for wildlife control purposes. A "silencer" is a device that, when attached to the muzzle of a firearm, acts as a muffler to greatly diminish the sound of a gunshot. Silencers have long been legally banned for public possession and use in most jurisdictions throughout the nation, given their reputed historic popularity among criminals for diminishing the likelihood of detection by police.

Under current Minnesota law, *it is a felony crime to sell or possess* "any device designed to silence or muffle the discharge of a firearm." An exception is provided for licensed peace officers to use silencers in tactical emergency response operations in accordance with written departmental policies.

This bill would create another exception - i.e., for any federal, state, local, or tribal government agency electing to use a silencer for the purpose of wildlife control.