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Orrin Hatch  
104 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON , DC 20510

Dear Senator Orrin Hatch,

I am writing to you and your fellow committee members regarding Bill S724 which is currently before the Judiciary Committee.

I am a rocket hobbyist and as such am one of the many people that Bill S724 seeks to bring relief to. It is important to note that the rocket propellant exempted by S724 is not an explosive as defined by Congress. It is due to the ATFE incorrectly putting the common consumer rocket propellant APCP, which does not explode or deflagrate on the explosives list, that we need Bill S724 to save the hobby and related industries.

One of the stupidest and unsafe aspects of requiring hobbyists to get a LEUP in order to purchase non-explosive commercial rocket motors is that, that permit allows the user to purchase true explosives. Potential terrorists could use the guise of sport rocketry to obtain a LEUP and thus legally purchase real explosives. The ATFE has conservatively estimated that they will require 80,000 man-hours to process LEUP requests for non-explosive APCP rocket motors. Add to this the man hours required to inspect the LEUP holder magazines. This amounts to a tremendous waste of scarce resources. The ATFE will spend millions of taxpayer dollars to permit and monitor rocket hobbyist's and school rocketry programs. This wasteful use of ATFE resources will actually increase the chance of real terrorists going undetected.

Asking for an exemption of the rocket propellant as described in S724 without weight limitations is reasonable and justified. APCP has been used in amateur and hobby rocketry for over 30 years without incident.

The ATFE virtually admits APCP is not dangerous with their proposed 62.5 gram propellant weight exemption. Under proposed ATFE regulations, minors and adults can buy as many 62.5 grams propellant cartridges as they want, but need a permit to buy one cartridge over 62.5 grams. If it can't explode, why require a permit at all? APCP used in hobby rockets does not detonate. The New Hampshire State Police and the Department of Transportation tried to make hobby APCP detonate and failed. The propellant is a flammable solid. A can of gasoline is more dangerous than an equivalent amount of APCP as used in hobby rocketry.

Does requiring a LEUP for hobby rocket motors increase National Security? No! It distracts the ATFE from their primary job and thus decreases National Security. No permit is required for someone to purchase a few gallons of diesel fuel and a few bags of fertilizer, and we all know the damage they can do. I have to stress one last time APCP as used in hobby rocketry is not an explosive. It doesn't matter whether I take a 62.5 gram slug or a 50 pound block of it, it will not explode.

Therefore adding any arbitrary weight limits to Bill S724 makes no sense. It will not increase the safety of the hobby nor add to the security of the nation. Passing Bill S724 as written will actually increase the safety of the nation, freeing up valuable ATFE assets to monitor real explosive transactions and movements. It is vitally important that the committee pass the bill as written and urge its passage by the full Senate.

If you have any questions, or if there is any information you need to make your decision please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Thomas F. Rau  
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