

1. 6:30 P.M. Teams Meeting Information - March 19, 2026

Documents:

[LE SUEUR COUNTY BOARD ROOM INVITES YOU TO JOIN THIS TEAMS MEETING 3.19.26.PDF](#)

2. Agenda

Documents:

[PUBLIC HEARING ON SHOTGUN ORDINANCE OVERVIEW.PDF](#)



Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners Meeting

**Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.**

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Meeting ID: 261 191 896 513 06

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# Public Hearing on Consideration of an Ordinance Imposing Firearm Limitations for Deer Hunting in Le Sueur County: March 19, 2026

## Summary and Background

In 1942, the State of Minnesota began restricting the types of firearms that could be used to hunt deer within a part of the state, later known as the “shotgun zone,” which included Le Sueur County.

During the 2025 Legislative Session, an act was adopted to repeal Minnesota Statute 97B.318, which established the shotgun zone for the 2026 deer hunting season. The act also included section 97B.031 subdivision 7, which permits a County Board of Commissioners to adopt an ordinance, following a public hearing, to limit the types of firearms used to hunt deer within the County, and institute the same restrictions included in prior statutory language contained in 97B.318 which stated:

During the regular firearms deer hunting season in the shotgun zone, only legal shotguns loaded with single-slug shotgun shells, legal muzzle-loading long guns, and legal handguns may be used for taking deer. Legal shotguns include those with rifled barrels.

The issue of enforcement of the ordinance remains in question, but at this time, it’s our understanding that DNR conservation officers will assist local law enforcement in enforcing a county ordinance.

The official public hearing on this matter is to take place in the evening of March 19 at 6:30 pm and has been properly noticed.

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## Options for County Action

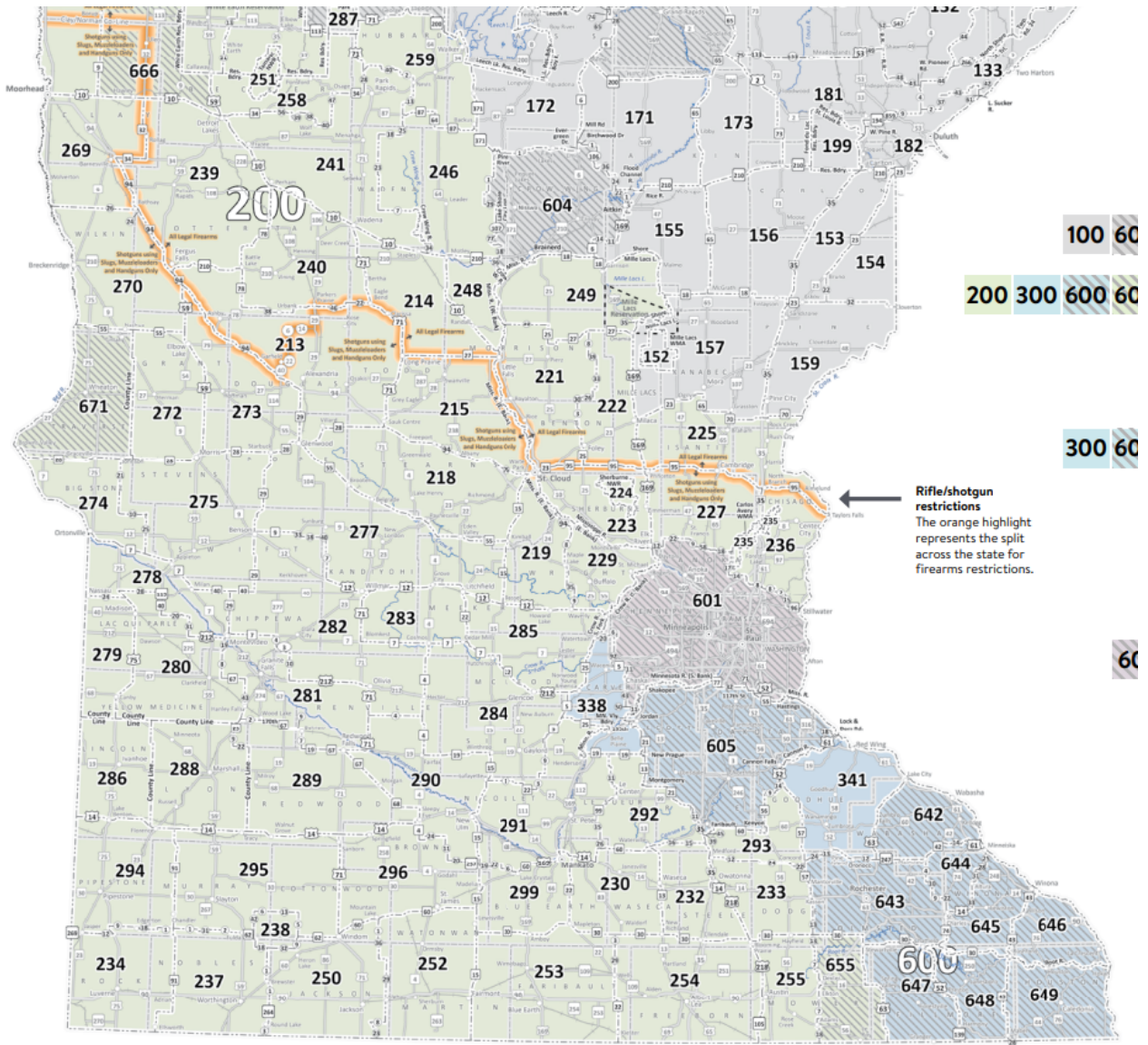
The County Board of Commissioners has two options to consider:

- 1) If the Board desires to **limit the use of firearms and remain shotgun only**, a County ordinance must be passed. A draft ordinance has been prepared for consideration. The DNR is requesting that all ordinances be passed by May 1, so information can be listed in the DNR hunting handbook.
- 2) If the Board does not desire to pass a shotgun ordinance and **let the State law prevail that allows rifle usage**, no actions is needed by the Board.

## Additional Resource Information

### Shotgun Zone Map

All areas south of the orange line are shotgun only areas.



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Correspondence from DNR



October 22, 2025

Le Sueur County Board Chair David Preisler  
455 N State Ave  
Le Center, MN 56057

Re: Notification of Option to Adopt Ordinance Limiting Firearms Used to Take Deer

Le Sueur County Board or County Sheriff's Office,

Because you are a County Board/Sheriff's Office located within the shotgun zone described in Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 97B.318, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is required to notify you that your county will be able to adopt an ordinance to limit the types of firearms used to take deer within your county pursuant to legislation that will be codified as subdivision 7 of Minnesota Statutes section 97B.031. See Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 1, article 4, sec. 26. **Subdivision 7 will become effective on January 1, 2026**, and provides the following:

**County authority to limit firearms for deer hunting.** A county board of a county located in the shotgun zone under Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 97B.318, may adopt an ordinance after notice and public hearing to limit the type of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county. Subsequent ordinances may be adopted under this subdivision only after additional notice and public hearing and are effective until repealed or modified by ordinance.

Laws of Minnesota 2025, 1st Spec. Sess. chapter 1, article 4, sec. 12. Additionally, **the legislature has repealed section 97B.318, which established the shotgun zone, effective January 1, 2026.** See *id.* at sec. 28. Thus, beginning January 1, 2026, any legal firearms can be used to take deer in your county unless and until an ordinance is passed pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 97B.031, subd. 7, that limits firearm types.

Enclosed is a draft ordinance that your county may choose to adopt should it desire to implement its authority under Minn. Stat. § 97B.031, subd. 7. Please note that this draft is informational only and is provided in an effort to encourage consistent and effective enforcement across the former shotgun zone counties that elect to implement ordinances under the new legislation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nothing in this communication should be considered legal advice and consultation with your county attorney is encouraged.

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Finally, to ensure that any firearms limitations your county adopts through an ordinance are included in the DNR's annual hunting regulations handbook, **please notify the DNR of your ordinance and its limitations by May 5<sup>th</sup> prior to the start of deer hunting.**

Sincerely,

Colonel Rodmen Smith



Encl. Draft Ordinance Limiting Firearm Types in Former Shotgun-only Counties

CC: Steven Rohlving  
Dennis Tietz  
Danny O'Keefe  
John King

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**Draft Ordinance Limiting Firearm Types in Former Shotgun-only Counties**

**Le Sueur COUNTY DEER HUNTING FIREARMS ORDINANCE**

The County Board of Le Sueur County ordains:

1. **Authority.** This county has the authority to limit the type(s) of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.031, subdivision 7.
2. **Firearms limited.** Only the following types of firearms may be used to take deer within the county: legal shotguns loaded with single-slug shotgun shells, legal muzzle-loading long guns, or legal handguns. Legal shotguns include those with rifled barrels.
3. **Unlawful firearms.** It is unlawful to use a firearm other than those described in subdivision (2) to take deer in the county.
4. **Penalties.** A person who violates this ordinance shall be punished for the offense by a fine of up to \$1,000, imprisonment of not more than ninety (90) days, or both.
5. **Enforcement.** The county sheriff and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources conservation officers have the authority to enforce the provisions of this ordinance.
6. **Effective date.** This ordinance shall be effective upon adoption after notice and a public hearing consistent with law. This ordinance shall remain in effect until modified or repealed as provided in Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.031, subdivision 7.

Public Hearing on Consideration of an Ordinance Imposing Firearm Limitations for Deer Hunting in Le Sueur County: March 19, 2026

**Letter from State Representatives**

**Chris Swedzinski**  
State Representative  
District 15-A



**Steve Drazkowski**  
State Senator  
District 20

County Administrator Joe Martin  
Le Sueur County  
Le Sueur County Government Center  
88 S. Park Avenue  
Le Center, MN 56057-1644

Dear County Administrator Martin,

Beginning with the 2026 deer hunting season, the statewide shotgun restriction will be repealed, allowing all legal firearms—including rifles—to be used for deer hunting in areas previously limited to shotguns. The original shotgun zone, established in 1942, was intended to aid deer population recovery by limiting the effectiveness of hunting firearms. Today, conditions have changed, and the legislature has acted to modernize these regulations.

We, the Senate and House authors of this legislation, pursued this change because all available data from other states indicate that rifles are safer than shotguns. In response, nearly all states have eliminated their shotgun-only areas. We have included safety information in this email.

Our original intent was that the DNR would no longer enforce shotgun vs. rifle use during hunting season, with sheriffs enforcing county ordinances. We recently learned that the DNR now claims it can enforce county ordinances. That has never been our interpretation of the law, and we hope it does not have to be tested by a lawsuit.

As county commissioners, you retain authority to regulate the discharge of firearms during deer hunting season within your jurisdiction. To make changes, the new state law requires the county to hold a public hearing and adopt an ordinance. If you do nothing, deer hunting with rifles will be allowed in your county, just as it is in northern Minnesota counties, in the entire states of Wisconsin and Iowa (with straight-walled cartridges), in North Dakota and South Dakota, and in all other states except two. According to law, the Department of Natural Resources will officially notify all affected counties of these options by March 1, 2026.

Thank you for your service and commitment to public safety and responsible wildlife stewardship

Sincerely,

Chris Swedzinski  
Representative District 15-A

Steve Drazkowski  
Senator District 20

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Public Hearing on Consideration of an Ordinance Imposing Firearm Limitations for Deer Hunting in Le Sueur County: March 19, 2026

Information Included from Representatives Swedzinski and Drazkowski

1. [Report from Pennsylvania](#)
2. [Report from Wisconsin](#)

## Statute Reference

1

MINNESOTA STATUTES 2025

97B.031

### 97B.031 USE AND POSSESSION OF FIREARMS.

Subdivision 1. **Permissible firearms and ammunition; big game and wolves.** A person may take big game and wolves with a firearm only if:

- (1) any rifle, shotgun, or handgun used is a caliber of at least .22 inches and has centerfire ignition;
- (2) the firearm is loaded only with single projectile ammunition;
- (3) a projectile used is a caliber of at least .22 inches and has a soft point or is an expanding bullet type;
- (4) any muzzleloader used has the projectile loaded only at the muzzle;
- (5) any smooth-bore muzzleloader used is a caliber of at least .45 inches; and
- (6) any rifled muzzleloader used is a caliber of at least .40 inches.

Subd. 2. **Handguns for small game.** A person may take small game with a handgun of any caliber in a manner prescribed by the commissioner, except that wolves may only be taken by hunting with the calibers specified in subdivision 1.

Subd. 3. **Firearms larger than ten gauge prohibited.** A person may not use a firearm with a bore larger than a ten gauge to take a protected wild animal.

Subd. 4. [Repealed, 2015 c 65 art 3 s 38]

Subd. 5. [Repealed, 2017 c 93 art 2 s 166]

Subd. 6. **Scopes.** A person may use a muzzleloader with a scope to take deer during the muzzleloader season. The scope may have magnification capabilities.

Subd. 7. **County authority to limit firearms for deer hunting.** A county board of a county located in the shotgun zone under Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 97B.318, may adopt an ordinance after notice and public hearing to limit the type of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within the county. Subsequent ordinances may be adopted under this subdivision only after additional notice and public hearing and are effective until repealed or modified by ordinance.

**History:** 1986 c 386 art 2 s 7; 1989 c 153 s 1; 1989 c 287 s 7; 2000 c 473 s 7; 2002 c 351 s 15; 2004 c 215 s 19; 2005 c 102 s 1; 2005 c 146 s 28,29; 2007 c 131 art 1 s 36; 2008 c 368 art 2 s 39; 1Sp2011 c 2 art 5 s 39; 2012 c 277 art 1 s 50,51; 2014 c 290 s 38; 1Sp2015 c 4 art 5 s 19,20; 2017 c 93 art 2 s 93; 2023 c 60 art 4 s 55; 1Sp2025 c 1 art 4 s 12

## 2007 Minnesota Statutes

[Authenticate](#)

This is an historical version of this statute chapter. Also view [the most recent published version](#).

### **97B.318 ARMS USE AREAS AND RESTRICTIONS; REGULAR FIREARMS SEASON.**

Subdivision 1. **Shotgun use area.** During the regular firearms season in the shotgun use area, only legal shotguns loaded with single-slug shotgun shells, legal muzzle-loading long guns, and legal handguns may be used for taking deer. Legal shotguns include those with rifled barrels.

The shotgun use area is that portion of the state lying within the following described boundary: Beginning on the west boundary of the state at the northern boundary of Clay County; thence along the northern boundary of Clay County to State Trunk Highway (STH) 32; thence along STH 32 to STH 34; thence along STH 34 to Interstate Highway 94 (I-94); thence along I-94 to County State-Aid Highway (CSAH) 40, Douglas County; thence along CSAH 40 to CSAH 82, Douglas County; thence along CSAH 82 to CSAH 22, Douglas County; thence along CSAH 22 to CSAH 6, Douglas County; thence along CSAH 6 to CSAH 14, Douglas County; thence along CSAH 14 to STH 29; thence along STH 29 to CSAH 46, Otter Tail County; thence along CSAH 46, Otter Tail County, to CSAH 22, Todd County; thence along CSAH 22 to U.S. Highway 71; thence along U.S. Highway 71 to STH 27; thence along STH 27 to the Mississippi River; thence along the east bank of the Mississippi River to STH 23; thence along STH 23 to STH 95; thence along STH 95 to U.S. Highway 8; thence along U.S. Highway 8 to the eastern boundary of the state; thence along the east, south, and west boundaries of the state to the point of beginning.

Subd. 2. **All legal firearms use area.** The all legal firearms use area is that part of the state lying outside of the shotgun use area.

**History:** [2006 c 281 art 2 s 40](#); [2007 c 131 art 1 s 44](#)

Public Hearing on Consideration of an Ordinance Imposing Firearm Limitations for Deer Hunting in Le Sueur County: March 19, 2026

### **Draft Ordinance**

**WHEREAS**, since 1942, the State of Minnesota had restricted the types of firearms used to hunt deer due to concerns with landowner rights, hunter and public safety, and deer population management.

**WHEREAS**, during the 2025 session, the Minnesota Legislature adopted, and the Governor signed an act to repeal Minnesota Statutes § 97B.318, which designated Le Sueur County as part of the shotgun-only use deer hunting area, effective for the firearms deer hunting season; and

**WHEREAS**, that same act added Minnesota Statutes § 97B.031, subdivision 7, which permits a County Board of Commissioners to adopt an ordinance after notice and public hearing to limit the types of firearms that may be used to hunt deer within a county, including restrictions of the same scope and type previously allowed by the former Minnesota Statutes § 97B.318; and

**WHEREAS**, the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners finds the extent of firearms limitations contained in the former Minnesota Statutes § 97B.318 promotes safety, mitigates potential trespassing, and responsibly manages the deer population; and

**WHEREAS**, the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners is authorized by Minnesota Statute § 97B.031, subd. 7, to maintain such firearms limitations as were contained in the former Minnesota Statutes § 97B.318 through the adoption of an ordinance after due notice and public hearing; and

**WHEREAS**, having now held the noticed public hearing required by law on March 19, 2026, and considering the comments offered by the public, the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners finds preservation of the shotgun use area for firearms deer hunting season in Le Sueur County to be appropriate.

**NOW, THEREFORE, the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioner does hereby ordain:**

### **AN ORDINANCE LIMITING FIREARMS ALLOWED FOR DEER HUNTING IN LE SUEUR COUNTY**

#### **Section 1. SHOTGUN USE AREA AND FIREARMS LIMITATIONS**

The “shotgun use area” for purposes of this Ordinance is defined as the entire territory within the boundaries of Le Sueur County, State of Minnesota.

During the regular firearms deer hunting season in the shotgun use area, only legal shotguns loaded with single-slug shotgun shells, legal muzzle-loading long guns, and legal handguns may be used for taking deer. Legal shotguns include those with rifled barrels.

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Unlawful firearms. It is unlawful to use a firearm other than those described herein to take deer in the County.

**Section 2. PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT**

Enforcement. The County Sheriff and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officers have the authority to enforce the provisions of this ordinance.

Penalties. A person who violates this ordinance shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be punishable as defined by law.

**Section 3. EFFECTIVE DATE AND DURATION**

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, and shall continue in full force and effect after its passage and publication in accordance with the law.

**ADOPTED** by the Le Sueur County Board of Commissioners this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.