



## The Case for Straight-Wall Big-Bore Cartridges in Restricted States

If you're a deer hunter in Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, or any other Midwest state that restricts centerfire rifle hunting to straight-wall cartridges, you already know the drill. The regulations exist. You're not changing them. So the question isn't *why* — it's *what now?*

Here at [Big Horn Armory](#), we've got a pretty strong opinion on that. And it starts with thinking BIG.

### **The Straight-Wall Rule: A Quick Primer**

Most Midwestern states adopted straight-wall cartridge regulations because the region is densely populated farmland. Bottlenecked rifle cartridges like .30-06 or .308 can travel over a mile. Straight-wall cartridges are typically large-caliber projectiles that don't have flat trajectories. Bullet drops are usually

measured in yards rather than inches. So unless the shooter is aiming halfway up the sky, the bullet won't go very far. That's the logic behind the regulation, and honestly, it's reasonable.

What the regulation *doesn't* say is that you have to give up power. Not even close.

## When "Restricted" Becomes an Advantage

Here's where it gets interesting. The straight-wall requirement didn't open the door to .44 Magnum handgun rounds and call it a day. It opened the door to some of the most devastating big-bore cartridges ever chambered in a rifle. Cartridges like .500 S&W Magnum, .460 S&W Magnum, and .454 Casull are all straight-wall, all fully compliant, and all absolutely devastating on whitetail deer.

The .500 S&W Magnum, for example, was originally designed as the world's most powerful production handgun cartridge. When you put it in a lever-action rifle with a proper barrel, the numbers go through the roof. We're talking energy figures that dwarf most centerfire bottleneck deer cartridges at typical Midwest hunting distances.

In other words, the regulation that seems restrictive on paper actually

*invites* you to run the biggest, hardest-hitting cartridges legally allowed for deer hunting in North America.

We think that's worth celebrating.

## Enter the Model 89 and Model 90

Big Horn Armory built its reputation on one simple premise: Go Big or Go Home. That's not just a tagline, it's the engineering philosophy behind every rifle that leaves our shop in Cody, Wyoming.



The [Model 89](#) is the first and only lever-action rifle purpose-built for the .500 S&W Magnum. Not adapted. Not retrofitted. Built from the ground up for one of the most powerful straight-wall cartridges on the planet. It's a full-sized lever gun with the look of a classic American working rifle and the punch of something considerably less gentle.



The [Model 90](#) chambers the .460 S&W Magnum, which, for the record, is also the most powerful straight-wall revolver cartridge ever mass produced. It's ballistically superior at longer distances within the typical Midwest hunting envelope, making it a favorite for hunters who want a little more reach without sacrificing the compliance advantages of the straight-wall format.



We also offer the [Model 90A in .454 Casull](#) for hunters who want a slightly more compact big-bore option that's still more than enough to cleanly and confidently take whitetail, hogs, and bear.

All three: straight-wall.

All three: fully compliant.

All three: the kind of rifle that makes your hunting partners ask questions at the check-in station.

## Why Lever Action Makes Sense Here

We're not going to pretend there aren't other platforms chambered in straight-wall cartridges. There are. But the lever action has some specific advantages that matter in the Midwest hunting context.

**It's fast.** A lever gun gets you back on target quickly for a follow-up shot in close-cover timber and standing corn, exactly the terrain most Midwest hunters are working.

**It's legal everywhere.** Some straight-wall states also have restrictions on magazine-fed semi-automatic rifles. A lever gun sidesteps that concern entirely. You're hunting with an American classic and complying with even the strictest interpretations of the rules.

**It hits harder than it has any right to.** A BHA Model 89 in .500 S&W generates energy figures in the range of 2,600–4,500 ft-lbs at the muzzle, depending on the load. That's *ethically outstanding* for deer, hogs, bison, elephants and anything else that wanders into your shooting lane.

## The AR500: A Straight-Wall Option for a Different Kind of Hunter

If the lever gun aesthetic isn't your style, we've got another answer: the [AR500 NEXT GEN Platform in .500 Auto Max](#).



The .500 Auto Max was purpose-designed for the AR platform, a straight-wall cartridge that delivers serious big-bore energy in a semi-automatic rifle. It's the most powerful AR on the market, and it's straight-wall compliant in the states that allow AR-style rifles.

It's a completely different tool from the Model 89 or 90, but it comes from the same philosophy. More power. Full compliance. Zero compromise.

## Compliance Shouldn't Mean Settling

Here's the bottom line: hunters in straight-wall states are sometimes sold the idea that they're giving something up. That they're making do. That the regulation is a limitation they just have to work around with whatever's available.

We respectfully disagree — and we've built an entire product line to prove it.

The .500 S&W Magnum, the .460 S&W Magnum, the .454 Casull, and the .500 Auto Max are not compromise cartridges. They are premium, purpose-built, hard-hitting big-bore rounds that happen to be straight-wall. The regulations didn't force you into something lesser. They just pointed you toward a different kind of power — one that Big Horn Armory has been building for since day one.

So if you're hunting in Ohio, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, or any other straight-wall state this season, don't think about what you can't run. Think about what you *can* run.

Then think about what 36,800 ft-lbs of energy looks like in a lever gun.

Then call your dealer.

## Ready to go big?

Browse the full BHA lineup at [bighornarmory.com/rifles](http://bighornarmory.com/rifles) and find your straight-wall solution. Questions?

Call us at 307-586-3700 or reach out through our contact page — we're gun guys just like you, and we love talking about this stuff.



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