

May 8th, 2020

The Honourable Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness
MP, Scarborough Southwest
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Blair,

I am writing to bring your attention to what I can only believe is an accidental error. We trust that once you become aware of this oversight, you will speedily move to make the appropriate corrections.

By including firearms used by millions of Canadian hunters and sport shooters, you not only violated your previous promise not to do so, but you inadvertently penalized millions of law-abiding firearms owners, both hunters and sport shooters, and destroyed hundreds of small Canadian businesses that sell firearms and other sporting equipment, all without increasing public safety. It serves no good public safety purpose to deliberately alienate one of the most law-abiding segments of our community.

Contrary to your promises made earlier, the recent ban on "assault-style firearms," inappropriately included a large number of sporting rifles and shotguns. For example, on 31 January 2020, a spokesperson in your office stated, "We ... will not target guns designed for hunting. Hunters, farmers, and law-abiding recreational gun owners will be treated with fairness and respect as we work together to keep our communities safe."

https://thepostmillennial.com/bill-blairs-office-says-liberals-will-not-target-guns-designed-for-hunting/?fbclid=IwAR1f7jrqETtTG4JO3kJnsc_Ns1rBc4sHEronl018g3pibaQ-UFs-CgDooKQ

The ban casts an incredibly wide net. Apparently, inadvertently, it ensnares a number of civilian rifles and shotguns that are widely used by hunters and sport shooters across Canada. Knowing that you are an honourable person, it is inconceivable for us to believe your office would intentionally ban hundreds of thousands of firearms used legitimately by millions of Canadians in a safe and responsible manner. If not rescinded, this would be a devastating blow to Canadian hunters and sport shooters as well as to the Olympic shooting sports.

Acting on behalf of 43,000 B. C. Wildlife Federation members, I request that you instruct your office to remove the many civilian rifles and shotguns that are on this list, that have been inadvertently prohibited through carelessly expediting the drafting of this Order-in-Council. It is inconceivable that it serves any public safety purpose to ban standard large-calibre hunting rifles and common semi-automatic rifles. The Ruger Mini-14 and Mini-30 that are banned are among the most common firearms in the country, used by hunters, sport shooters, and agriculturalists.

The announcement of the new prohibitions was entitled, "a ban on assault-style weapons," although the ban casts an exceptionally wide net. To be sure, it includes firearms that resemble military firearms, which have been labelled "assault-style weapons," but it also includes an amazingly wide sample of firearms and militaria. In addition to banning common sporting firearms, the ban also includes:

- mortars,
- crew-served anti-tank weapons,
- missile launchers,
- small-bore rifles,
- Airsoft guns,
- a bizarre array of harmless contraptions also called "guns."

The variety is truly mind-boggling.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/05/01/prime-minister-announces-ban-assault-style-firearms>

Perhaps amusingly, it appears your government may have prohibited the beloved T-shirt launcher that is featured prominently at many baseball and basketball games as well as the dreaded potato gun. Whether or not this was intentional, Canada will not be safer for it, and sports fans may not be pleased. Perhaps the ban may have also intentionally eliminated the fireworks launchers that produce such awesome displays on Canada Day, although many Canadians will be disappointed. Your office has indeed cast a wide net – and all for public safety.

It might help educate your staff if I point out that gang violence is the most prominent threat to public safety in Canada, not licensed firearms owners, whether hunters, sport shooters, or Canadians who own firearms for historical, cultural, agricultural, or as part of their military or police service. According to Statistics Canada data, almost half (47%) of firearm homicides are gang related. Lawful firearm owners are rarely involved. Just 2% of accused murderers had a valid firearms license.

Licensed gun owners are much less likely to be murderous than other Canadians. As Professor Gary Mauser reported to the Senate of Canada, licensed gun owners had a homicide rate of 0.67 per 100,000 licensed gun owners over the 11-year period (2006-2016). In contrast, the average national homicide rate (including gun owners) was 2.12 per 100,000 adults during the same period.

As I'm confident you know, hunters are law-abiding and bring value to their communities. Over 1.3 million Canadians, in all provinces and territories, have a hunting license. You may be surprised to learn that roughly half of Canada's hunters live in larger cities. Hunting spending in Canada totaled \$5.9 billion in 2018. The resulting contribution to GDP was \$4.1 billion. Hunting supported 33,000 jobs and generated just under \$2 billion in labour revenue.

<https://www.conferenceboard.ca/research/angling-hunting-trapping-and-sport-shooting>

Many Canadian families and Indigenous peoples depend upon hunting to provide food for the family table through legal harvesting, with the added benefit and getting out in the wilderness, as well as spending time with family and friends. Hunters are the largest contributors to conservation, as the money they pay for licenses goes into securing conservation lands or funding projects to manage wildlife.

The ban may also catch shotguns used in trap and skeet as well as hunting. Millions of Canadians enjoy target sports and own these types of firearms, including Olympic athletes. An estimated 1.4 million Canadian target shooters spent over \$2.6 billion in 2018. This includes shotgun sports, rifle and handgun target shooting. The target sports bring value to Canada and to the communities that host the meets, including tourism and supporting small businesses, often in small towns where the revenue is sorely needed. This spending boosted GDP by \$1.8 billion, supported 14,000 jobs, and generated \$868 million in labour revenue (2018).

Canada has a long and proud history of competitive marksmanship. Throughout the 20th Century and into the 21st, Canadians have volunteered to help protect the free world from aggression. It is important for Canadian national sovereignty that Canadian civilians be prepared to participate in military activities in times of national need. Times like world war II, Korean War, Viet Nam, and more recently, in Afghanistan.

To sum up, we trust that once you become aware of this oversight, you will speedily move to make the appropriate corrections. The ban casts too wide a net to be targeted for public safety. It serves no good public safety purpose to deliberately alienate a law-abiding segment of our community, all while spending billions of Canadian taxpayer dollars.

Yours in Conservation,



Mr. Bill Bosch
President
BC Wildlife Federation



Copies To:

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Premier of Canada
Mr. Joël Lightbound, Louis-Hébert, MP, Parliamentary Secretary of the Minister of Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness
Mr. Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister of Public Safety Canada
Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus, MP, Charlesbourg-Haute-Saint-Charles, Standing Committee on Public Safety & National Security
Mr. Glen Motz, MP, Medicine Hat-Cardston-Warner, Standing Committee on Public Safety & National Security
Mr. Bob Zimmer, MP, Prince George-Peace River-Northern Rockies, Standing Committee on Indigenous & Northern Affairs
The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia
The Honourable Mike Farnworth, MLA, Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General of the Province of BC
Executive Committee & Board of Directors of the BC Wildlife Federation
Gary Mauser, Firearms Committee Chair, BC Wildlife Federation
Doug Bancroft, Recreational Sports Shooting Committee Chair, BC Wildlife Federation
Alberta Fish & Game Association
Manitoba Wildlife Federation
New Brunswick Wildlife Federation
Northwest Territories Wildlife Federation
Nova Scotia Federation of Anglers & Hunters
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
Ontario Federation of Anglers & Hunters
Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation
Yukon Fish & Game Association
Canadian Coalition for Firearms Rights
National Firearms Association
Canadian Shooting Sports Association