

October 24, 2022

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau,
Prime Minister of Canada
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The Honourable Marco Mendicino,
Minister of Public Safety
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Dear Sirs,

The federal government's freeze on the sale and transfer of legal handguns will have no effect on violent crime in Canada. The billions of dollars the government is about to spend on increased regulation of legal firearm owners should be directed to apprehending criminals and removing illegally obtained handguns from our streets.

Legally obtained firearms are seldom used in the commission of crimes in Canada because this country has extremely stringent rules about who can obtain and possess firearms. Canadian firearm owners have an enviable track record of care and responsibility.

Ottawa should listen to Canadians, who responded to a 2018 federal discussion paper on gun control. On the topic of a handgun ban, respondents told the government: "Many participants felt strongly that a ban would target law-abiding owners, rather than illicit firearms, and would not greatly impact crime reduction (particularly gang violence). As a result, many called for enhanced enforcement capacity for law enforcement and border services, as well as harsher punishments for firearms trafficking and gun-related crime."

Instead of following that sage advice, the federal government has implemented a freeze on the sale and transfer of legal handguns, taking law enforcement's focus away from the criminal use of illegal handguns.

Even the Canadian Association of Police Chiefs opposes a ban on legally obtained handguns. According to Chris Lewis, former commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police: "A handgun ban in Toronto will do nothing to abate gun crime ... criminals are totally ignoring criminal law ... and the 'law-abiding' handgun owners are just that, and not a threat."

Obtaining a Possession and Acquisition License required for the purchase of a firearm in Canada is a rigorous process that typically takes four to six months, but at a minimum includes a 28-day waiting period.

Before applying for a PAL, applicants must take at least eight hours of training and pass a written and practical test. The Canadian Restricted Firearms Safety Course required to apply for a handgun permit requires two days of training and assessments.

Background checks extend over the lifetime of the applicant and include searches for a history of harassment, restraining orders, or criminal activity. Applicants must supply character references and the RCMP may interview you, your references, your current spouse and former spouses and common-law partners. Any irregularity can result in denial of the application.

Canada's firearm regulations ensure that only stable, responsible individuals can legally obtain handguns. The names of people charged with crimes in Canada are checked daily against the list of PAL holders.

The BCWF is urging the federal government to properly fund law enforcement agencies to catch and prosecute people who commit criminal offences with firearms and to bolster the Canadian Border Services Agency to stop the flow of illegal handguns across our borders.

Sincerely,



Chuck Zuckerman

President

B.C. Wildlife Federation

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