



The Alberta Fish & Game Association is your voice in conservation

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice, Attorney General of Canada
House of Commons
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Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

The Alberta Fish and Game Association represents 25,000 Albertans and their families throughout the Province of Alberta. It is among the oldest conservation organizations in Canada with its founding in 1908. Throughout this time, it has constantly promoted and been involved in wildlife conservation and educational programs. These educational programs focus on conservation, hunting, angling, outdoor ethics, and firearm safety. Our policies clearly set out that we support mandatory firearms training including the requirement of a *Firearms Licence*. Canadians have a tradition of responsible use of firearms that forms part of our collective and varied cultural traditions.

The recent decision that up to 1,500 models of firearms are immediately *prohibited* in Canada by the Government of Canada shows a lack of understanding of the issues related to the criminal use of firearms in Canada. Canada already has a robust *Firearms Legislation* that imposes strict conditions on recreational shooters, trappers and hunters. The foundation is safety, required storage, proper handling, and mandatory licensure.

The decision to ban these firearms appears to be driven by internal ideology and political opportunism. Contrast that with the cross-partisan support at all levels of government, industry, and the public in Canada related to the challenges dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. This support was garnered because it was based on knowledge and critical thinking that resulted in an evidence-based approach to achieve health and economic outcomes. As Canadians, we expect our politicians to use this approach when dealing with all issues, both today and in the future.

Canada faces a deep and lasting recession which will require the greatest diversity possible in our economy on a go forward basis. This firearm ban makes achieving this goal more challenging. The recreational shooter, trapper and hunter community, which includes the related industries, have important contributions to make as part of our economic and social recovery efforts. The required buy back will take precious and diminished taxpayer dollars away from the real priorities facing our nation.

The underlying cause of criminal use of firearms is directly related to social economic factors and overall health of Canadians. These are the same factors that will be critical to address during the economic recovery from the pandemic. Policies and programs must be outcome based and achieve the greatest value for each dollar spent. The ban on ownership of firearms, by law abiding Canadians, only clouds the real issues and facts. It could even make the problem worse as it does nothing to address the issue of illegal importation and criminal use of firearms in Canada. Instead the Government of Canada has told law abiding, Canadian firearm owners they are the problem and labeled them as dangerous to Canadian society. The action has the potential to further the growing divisions within society in what is an increasingly fragile Canadian Federation.

Firearm owners, like all Canadians, share the outrage, sorrow and suffering when tragic loss of life occurs regardless of the cause. Such circumstances must not be used to advance political agenda or pander to interest groups. What is required is a transparent science-based analysis of what would be the most effective steps to take to further reduce the criminal use of firearms, while not imposing unreasonable restrictions on law abiding Canadians. The Government of Canada must immediately reverse this decision and enter into meaningful consultations with the firearms community and others to develop a plan that addresses the underlying causes of the criminal use of firearms.

Respectively submitted,



Brian Dingreville, President
The Alberta Fish and Game Association

cc:

Honourable Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Opposition
Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta
Honourable Doug Schweitzer, Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General
Delinda Ryerson, AFGA Executive Director