

Director Sperling and PRRD Board of Directors



I write to you to request that you oppose a Municipal Bylaw banning the storage or transportation of handguns by licensed firearms owners.

The Federal government recently tabled legislation (Bill C-21) that authorizes municipal governments to pass a bylaw that would prohibit the storage and transportation of handguns within their jurisdiction. This proposed legislation is legally flawed. It uses the criminal code to circumvent the constitutional prerogatives of provincial governments. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan have already signaled that they oppose this measure.

While the legislation purports to protect public safety, it focuses uniquely on handguns owned by people who have been vetted by the RCMP and ignores all illegally held firearms. As I am sure you know, violent criminals do not bother getting a Firearms License or register their handguns.

Banning the storage of handguns within your jurisdiction will not stop criminal violence.

It is already illegal to possess and transport a handgun without a license.

It is already illegal to use that handgun anywhere except at an approved range.

Under the current firearms law, all legally held handguns must be registered, and all firearms owners must be licensed. Licensed owners are reviewed every night by the RCMP for any court orders or criminal offences under the "continuous eligibility" provision. See the latest Report of the Commissioner of Firearms.

Making our communities safer is a laudable goal widely supported, including by members of the shooting sports community. The shooting sports are made up of people from all levels of society. They are not the ones doing the shootings.

Under current firearm regulations, legal handgun owners must take the shortest direct route to an approved shooting range. Handguns must also be locked in a secure container, unloaded, rendered inoperable, locked in the trunk, and separate from the ammunition.

The police say that virtually all the guns used by gangs have been smuggled illegally across our borders; exceptionally few come from lawful owners. A municipal bylaw that prohibits handguns would do nothing but cause the property of law-abiding taxpayers in your community to be confiscated by the federal government.

As I am sure you know, the issues around gang violence are complicated. Success in combating gang violence requires work within the community to keep youth at risk out of gang influence. It involves policies that help reduce poverty and provide enhanced access to education. None of these issues were addressed in Bill C-21.

Keep your powder dry

Andy Waddell

President

Dawson Creek Sportsman's Club

References:

Bill C-21

<https://parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-2/bill/C-21/first-reading#ID0E0YB0AA>

<https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/firearms/2019-commissioner-firearms-report>

I ask that you publicly not support the proposed Bill and any proposed bylaw. Instead, I ask that you support your licensed community members in pressing the Federal Government to do real work on the issues and stop attacking lawful firearms owners.