

An Open Letter from BCWF to Members of Parliament

September 25, 2009

Dear Member of Parliament,

We are writing you today with an appeal from the membership of the BC Wildlife Federation for you to personally support Portage – Lisgar MP Candice Hoepfner's Private Member's Bill that is scheduled for second Reading on Monday, September 28th, Bill C-391.

MP Hoepfner's proposal would dispense with the requirement that the rifles and shotguns of Canadian hunters and sport shooters be registered with the Canadian Firearms Center in the Firearms Registry. This will substantially reduce the costs associated with the Registry without compromising public safety.

Bill C-391 will not reduce any of the existing controls on Restricted Firearms (most handguns) or Prohibited Firearms (short barreled handguns and fully automatic firearms). These will still need to be registered and will continue to be subject to stringent controls.

The over two billion dollars that the Long Gun Registry has cost to date has not been shown to have saved one life or prevented one act of criminal violence. It may, in fact, have actually cost lives. If even a small portion of that money had been spent on front-line police officers, shelters for women and children at risk of domestic violence, or social health programs, society would have been provided with greater and more immediate benefits across the public safety spectrum.

The reason the Long Gun Registry is a failure is extremely simple. It is aimed in the wrong direction. Instead of targeting those who pose the greatest risk to public safety, violent criminals, it instead targets those with the lowest risk – law-abiding citizens. It in fact completely ignores the criminals because they cannot fulfill the most basic requirement for registering a firearm, that of possessing a Firearms Possession and Acquisition Licence. This is illustrated by the fact that most of the firearms recovered by police that have been used in a criminal manner (up to 90 per cent depending on which study) have never been registered in Canada. They have been illegally smuggled into the country, usually from the US.

The Registry also puts law-abiding owners' security at risk. There have been multiple security breaches – demonstrated just last week when the Canadian Firearms Center released owner's data to the polling firm Ekos Research Associates. Most firearms have significant value and criminals will pay handsomely for a list of where every gun in Canada is stored in order that they can be stolen.

Canada has spent at least two billion dollars to build a system that was to improve public safety and it is clearly a failure as was predicted. The Government of the day said the system would improve public safety but it has actually had the opposite effect. Canada has compiled a list of legally acquired property of those least likely to commit criminal violence that is actively being sought, and likely to be used, by those most likely to do so.

MP Hoepfner is proposing to end this bottomless waste of taxpayer funds with Bill C-391. We urge that you support MP Hoepfner and vote for this Bill when it comes before the House of Commons (scheduled for September 28, 2009).

Yours in conservation,

Mel Arnold

Patti MacAhonic

Mike Fowler

President
Chair

Executive Director

Firearms Committee

BC Wildlife Federation

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cc: Prime Minister of Canada, The Right Honourable Stephen Harper

Premier of BC, The Honourable Gordon Campbell

BC Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General, The Honourable Kash Heed

BCWF Membership