

Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee Meeting
Record of Discussion
August 24, 2006 11:00 A.M., EST by teleconference

In Attendance

Chair: Diane MacLaren, Assistant Deputy Minister
Mike Ackerman
Linda Baggaley
Helen Banulescu
Joel Bernard
Tony Bernardo
Christina Cefaloni
Tim Cogan
Alain Cossette
Louis D'Amour
Greg Farrant
Gerry Gamble
Murray Grismer
Bob Head
Roland Nanel
Suzing Hum
Gary Mauser
David Pimm
Colleen Pulcine
Roy Rempel
Linda Thom
Steve Torino

Regrets

John Gayder

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee, and introduced herself. She noted that it would have been preferable to hold the first meeting in person. However, the scope of work ahead and the tight timeframe made it important to convene the Advisory Committee as soon as possible via teleconference.

Committee members briefly introduced themselves. In addition, John Gayder's letter of introduction was read to the participants.

Participants in Ottawa were introduced:

- Roy Remple, Policy Advisor to Minister Day;
- Joel Bernard, Director of Parliamentary Affairs for Minister Day;
- Helen Banulescu, Director General, Policing Policy Directorate;
- Tim Cogan, Director, Firearms and Operational Policing Policy; and
- Firearms and Operational Policing Policy Division staff.

Christina Cefaloni (613-990-9933) will be responsible for operational issues of the Committee.

Colleen Pulcine(613-949-7770) will handle travel, expense and administrative queries.

The Chair noted the role of the Department for managing the upcoming stakeholder consultations and working with the Advisory Committee.

2. ADVISORY COMMITTEE BACKGROUND AND GOVERNMENT DIRECTION/TERMS OF REFERENCE

Roy Remple summarized the Government's strategic direction. He outlined the two-phase approach to the strategy, of which the key element in the first phase was the introduction in the House of Commons of Bill C-21 to repeal the requirement to register non-restricted firearms. The legislation will be debated this Fall in the House.

The second phase of the strategy involves consulting with the provinces, territories and stakeholders on further legislative reforms. The consultations will focus on two specific areas, namely measures to enhance the effectiveness of firearms prohibitions to prevent individuals prohibited under court order from acquiring guns, and one-time firearms licensing.

Mr. Rempel reviewed the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee. The Committee will operate as part of a broader consultative process, and provide ongoing advice to the Minister. Members participate as individuals, rather than as representatives of organizations. Membership on the Advisory Committee is for two years.

The issue of a possible amnesty for those in possession of prohibited "12(6)" handguns was raised. It was acknowledged that the matter is complex and would require legislative changes not covered in Bill C-21. The focus for the Government is to repeal the registration requirement for non-restricted firearms. Nevertheless, these other issues will likely come up in the consultations.

Committee members were informed that some communications of committee members might be released if requested under the *Access to Information and Privacy Acts*. Advice to the Minister would be protected. Since it is anticipated that the media will contact Committee members, it was determined that media requests would be referred to the Department.

3. UPDATE ON FIREARMS CONSULTATIONS

The Chair summarized the Department's current work on the consultations and the timeline. Following through on the Minister's commitment to consult with the provinces, a letter has been drafted requesting written feedback from the provinces and territories. It is anticipated that the letter will be sent out in early September. There will be two months in which to reply, with responses due by October 31, 2006.

The Department is assembling a list of the key stakeholder groups, representing those both in favor and against enhanced restrictions in order to ensure a comprehensive and balanced consultation. Aboriginal viewpoints must also be sought. The list of key stakeholders will be distributed to all Committee members for additional input. Suggestions would be appreciated by Thursday, August 31, 2006. (Note: The deadline has been extended until Sept. 1, 2006.)

EKOS Research Associated Inc. is being asked to conduct the stakeholder consultations. EKOS is a professional and reputable firm, which can provide results in a timely manner.

In collaboration with the Department, EKOS is developing a targeted online survey tool that stakeholders, who have received a written invitation, can access and complete. The questionnaire will be shared with the Advisory Committee. Any suggested questions that could be included in the survey regarding one-time licensing and firearms prohibitions should be sent to Christina Cefaloni.

EKOS is expected to submit its final report by October 31, 2006. It will be provided to Committee members.

4. OTHER BUSINESS/ROUNDTABLE

The Department will provide a Communications contact to the Advisory Committee. A media package will be forwarded to the members for their reference.

Members will also receive security clearance documents to complete.

5. CONCLUSION/NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in person in Ottawa by early October. An effort will be made to schedule the meeting to coincide with the Minister's availability so that he will be able to meet with the members.

The Department will contact the Committee members to discuss availability, and travel arrangements.

Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee Meeting
Record of Discussion

October 23, 24, 2006, 8:00 A.M., EST in Ottawa

In Attendance

Chair: Diane MacLaren, Assistant	Greg Farrant
Deputy Minister	Gerry Gamble
Mike Ackerman	Murray Grismer
Linda Baggaley	Bob Head
Helen Banulescu	Gary Mauser
Joel Bernard	David Pimm
Tony Bernardo	Colleen Pulcine
Christina Cefaloni	Roy Rempel
Tim Cogan	Linda Thom
Alain Cossette	Steve Torino
Louis D'Amour	John Gayder

Statement to Minister Day

October 23, 24, 2006

General Principles regarding Public Safety

We would like to thank the Minister for the opportunity to contribute to the public safety of Canada through the establishment of the Canadian Firearms Advisory Committee. As concerned Canadians, we share the Minister's goal in creating effective firearms control, stronger community based policing, enhanced public safety and yet, provide significant value to all Canadians. These recommendations are simple, utilize proven cost-effective mechanisms that will be easily understood by law enforcement, firearms owners and the general public. It will effectively keep firearms out of the hands of those who should not have them while protecting the interests and concerns of Canada's law abiding firearms community.

Prohibitions

The Committee recommends tightening the tracking and management of prohibited persons through the establishment of a **Prohibited Persons Registry**. This system would, through the existing FIP, RAT and continuous eligibility systems, add a mandatory requirement to report change of address to authorities and enable law enforcement to maintain a watchful eye on persons who are prohibited from possessing firearms.

These significant measures to provide tougher prohibitions for violent criminals can be monitored through vigorous enforcement or conditions of release, and we encourage the government to examine the possibilities inherent in random spot checks and other methods.

We also recommend the government review, through the work of this Committee, mandatory prohibitions for serious violent offences. We strongly feel that these measures will provide much improved levels of personal security for all Canadians.

Licensing

It is recommendation of this Committee to enhance the existing licensing system by merging the Possession Only and the Possession and Acquisition Licenses into the Continuous Firearms License. This license will radically streamline the efficiency of the licensing system through continuous eligibility and encourage participation in the system. It will also reduce cost, allowing the expenditure of these recovered resources to enhanced screening.

The system will feature a more robust screening process by permitting more direct police involvement in the initial vetting of applicants. This process retains the tried and true Canadian Firearms Safety Course, uses existing resources and will save money by decreasing the bureaucratic load while improving confidence in the accuracy of the screening process. It reduces costs by harmonizing the existing **Authorization to Transport** and **Special Authority to Possess** processes into the Restricted Firearms License, allowing these precious resources to permit expanded front line policing, improved programs for social groups and increased security against gun smuggling on Canada's borders.

Educating Canadians

We feel these measures will be welcomed by Canadians and will need to be effectively communicated across the country to dispel myths about the new system and inform citizens, police, court officials, judiciary, media and others regarding the positive new effects created by these changes. This will greatly increase public confidence in the new system and permit more efficient enforcement of Canada's laws.