

FUNDY ROYAL FIREARMS COMMITTEE

3281 Main St. Salisbury, NB E4J 2K9

Honourable Carl Urquhart
Minister of Public Safety
Province of New Brunswick
Argyle Place
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

SUBJECT: STANDARDS FOR SHOOTING RANGES IN NEW BRUNSWICK AND OTHER FIREARM ISSUES

Dear Mr. Urquhart:

I am writing you on behalf of the Fundy Royal Firearms Committee (FRFC). The FRFC is a group that was formed to address proposed federal legislation aimed at placing additional restrictions on firearms owners in Canada.

The FRFC consists of the following organizations;

1. Sussex Fish & Game
2. Havelock Sportsmen's Club
3. Canaan River Fish & Game
4. Petitcodiac Sportsman's Club
5. Albert County Hunters
6. Shepody Fish & Game
7. Hampton Rifle & Pistol Club
8. NB Wildlife Federation (approximately 30 Clubs).

The FRFC came into existence early in 2017 and we had our first meeting with MP Alaina Lockhart in August of that year. We met again with MP Lockhart on October 17, 2017 and the final two meetings were on February 23 and April 13, 2018. Main items discussed were the federal Bills turning the defunct long gun registry information over to Quebec, the Firearms Marking Regulations and what is now known as Bill C-71.

The FRFC was invited, and attended a Roundtable with Andrew Sheer in May, 2018; we also participated in a discussion with Larry Miller, an MP from Ontario (organized by Rob Moore) and recently a Roundtable in Moncton regarding a potential handgun ban hosted by the honourable Bill Blair on October 29th.

Our first concern rests with the Standards for Shooting Ranges and their application. To the best of our knowledge these standards were last amended in 2003. In 1999 the Provincial Government put in place a *Provincial Firearms Advisory Committee*. This Committee believed there was a requirement for developing standards for designing and constructing shooting ranges within the province. At the same time the Chief

Firearms Officer (CFO) organized annual firearms workshops where each approved shooting club in the province was permitted representation.

These workshops allowed range operators to discuss issues pertinent to each range as well as hear what the rationale was for each and every standard. In addition the various range operators were permitted to provide rebuttal and valuable information to both the Chief Provincial Firearms Office as well as the Dept. of Natural Resources.

This year a large number of ranges were totally shut down by the CFO. Since some of these refusals were not sent out until the end of November and snow and ice were prevalent a plea was made by some of these shooting clubs for a conditional approval until weather conditions improved and repairs could be made. The CFO heard us and granted us a conditional approval. We are certainly thankful to the CFO for this.

The FRFC now realizes that we cannot let our guard down and the influence of the federal government regarding firearm control on legal gun owners often results in additional pressure on us by the provincial government of the day. This pressure depends totally on the political affiliation of both levels of government.

Some, but not all of our ranges are on Crown Land and are therefore leased through DNR/DERD. Recently DERD has been holding back lease approvals pending range approval by the CFO. Some of these ranges have been leased for 40 years or more and many shooting clubs have hundreds of thousands of dollars of infrastructure in place. This has certainly been a worry for many of us. Some shooting clubs who are not a member of our Committee have shared with me their anxieties over meeting the standards in upcoming inspections. This should not be the case and we should have a non-adversarial relationship with the CFO and Public Safety Inspectors. Can we change this? I have copied this letter to the Minister of DERD for his information.

So we respectfully request the following:

1. That the *Standards for Design and Construction of Shooting Ranges in New Brunswick* be immediately made available electronically through the government website since they are not easily obtained.
2. That no amendments are made to these standards until full consultation has taken place with shooting clubs throughout the province.
3. That the Department of Public Safety consider resurrecting workshops aimed at informing and consulting operators of shooting clubs on standards and other requirements. NOTE: In the past the CFO covered the finances required to run these workshops and if government finances are limited our Clubs will provide the required funds to run these much needed workshops. These workshops have proven to build rapport and respect for one another leading to improved relations which is desirable.
4. That access to knowledgeable staff in the CFO's office be established so that shooting clubs can ask and obtain advice and direction regarding requirements as well as to inspection procedures from knowledgeable staff.

Finally, our Committee was informed by the current Federal Government that the previous N.B. Provincial Government had given their complete support to Bill C-71 and other federal firearms legislation. Unfortunately the previous government saw no need

to consult with hunters, shooters and firearm collectors in this province before giving their full approval. The federal government is currently considering a handgun ban and will probably be consulting the Premier of this province. Can we be assured that we will be consulted before the Premier gives his response?

Sincerely,

Ron Whitehead

Chairman, Fundy Royal Firearms Committee

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c.c. Honourable Mike Holland, Minister DERD