



Yukon Legislative Assembly

Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6



October 25, 2022

Hon. Marco Mendicino
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Mendicino,

RE: The Yukon Opposes Use of RCMP Resources for Federal Gun Confiscation Program

The Yukon has joined the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba as the fourth jurisdiction to formally oppose the use of police resources to enforce the Trudeau government's gun confiscation plan. We are pleased that New Brunswick has also joined this group – five provinces and territories officially oppose your firearms confiscation plan.

The Yukon Legislative Assembly voted in favour of our motion, which I introduced as the Yukon Party Official Opposition Justice Critic.

The motion passed by the Yukon Legislative Assembly reads:

“THAT this House urges the Yukon government to ensure that territorial policing resources are not diverted to assist in the implementation of the Government of Canada's gun “buy-back” program.”

To help you understand the context for this decision by the Yukon, here is an excerpt from my speech in the Legislative Assembly:

“Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to emphasize four things. It is important to take an evidence-based approach rather than one guided by emotion. Public policy based on fear is not the right approach to take.

Second, the so-called gun “buyback” program is actually the proposed confiscation of lawfully acquired property from Canadian citizens.

Third, it is clear that diverting public money and police resources away from dealing with serious issues, including organized crime, would actually make the Yukon and other parts of Canada less safe.

Fourth, the National Police Federation, which is the union representing RCMP members, agrees that the federal Liberal approach diverts police resources away from where they are needed most.

The National Police Federation issued a position statement about the matter of the Trudeau government's firearm legislation and the so-called "buyback" program in which they clearly and specifically stated that those measures actually — I quote: "... diverts extremely important personnel, resources, and funding away from addressing the more immediate and growing threat of criminal use of illegal firearms."

Mr. Speaker, it is clear to anyone who looks closer at the evidence that the Trudeau government is proposing to divert police resources away from where they are needed most and instead would target licensed firearms owners and forcibly confiscate their lawfully acquired property. The Liberals' actions are politically motivated and are also contrary to the advice of RCMP members and other experts on public safety." (October 12, 2022, Hansard pages 2167 and 2168)

As a former Minister of Justice and on behalf of the Yukon Party Official Opposition, I urge you to take the following specific actions:

1. **Work with the Yukon to appoint a Chief Firearms Officer for the territory, reporting to the territorial government.** This would make the position more accountable, speed up the processing of PAL renewals for law-abiding citizens, and also allow for faster suspension of a licence if required.
2. **Cancel the proposed "buy-back" program, repeal the May 2020 Order-in-Council, and allow law-abiding firearms owners to keep their legally acquired property.** As stated by the National Police Federation, the "buy-back" program actually "diverts extremely important personnel, resources, and funding away from addressing the more immediate and growing threat of criminal use of illegal firearms."
3. **Prioritize crime reduction, gang diversion, safe communities, secure borders, Canadian enforcement agency integration, and cross-border safety of the public and all police officers.** This was called for by the National Police Federation.
4. **Increase funding for the RCMP Border Integrity Program, to enable dedicated proactive RCMP investigative weapons enforcement activity and the dismantling of gang and organized crime firearms smuggling.** This was called for by the National Police Federation.
5. **Help law enforcement properly address crime prevention rather than focusing funding and resources towards the ongoing monitoring of unrelated restrictions on licensed and regulated firearms owners.** This was called for by the National Police Federation.
6. **Prioritize increased resources for the federal policing program of the RCMP.** In 2018, the Yukon – like other jurisdictions – actually lost police positions used for investigations into matters such as drug trafficking and organized crime due to federal cuts to this funding. That funding should be restored, and enhanced.
7. **Allow Gun and Gang Violence Action funding from the federal government to be able to be used by provinces and territories for policing.**

8. **Work with all orders of government to address the root causes of organized crime, including early identification of at-risk youth, diversion programs, and job-skills training to help at-risk people find opportunities and productive alternatives to becoming involved with a gang.**

We believe these alternative measures would be a more effective approach to dealing with the real issues facing Canadians, and improve public safety while respecting the rights of law-abiding firearms owners.

In conclusion, I urge you and your Cabinet colleagues to listen to the growing number of provinces and territories that are formally opposing your government's planned forced confiscation of lawfully-acquired firearms from licenced owners who have done nothing wrong. This wasteful and expensive plan would divert police resources from dealing with organized crime.

Sincerely,



Brad Cathers
MLA for Lake Laberge
Yukon Party Official Opposition Justice Critic

Cc: Hon. Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Official Opposition
Hon. Tyler Shandro, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General, Alberta
Hon. Christine Tell, Minister of Corrections, Policing & Public Safety, Saskatchewan
Hon. Kelvin Goertzen, Minister of Justice & Attorney General, Manitoba
Hon. R.J. Simpson, Minister of Justice, Northwest Territories
Hon. Craig Simailak, Minister of Justice, Nunavut
Hon. Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, British Columbia
Hon. Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General, Ontario
Hon. François Bonnardel, Minister of Public Security, Quebec
Hon. Brad Johns, Attorney General & Minister of Justice, Nova Scotia
Hon. Kris Austin, Minister of Public Safety, New Brunswick
Hon. John Hogan, Minister of Justice & Public Safety, Newfoundland & Labrador
Hon. Darlene Compton, Minister of Justice & Public Safety, Prince Edward Island
Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the Third Party
Raquel Dancho, Shadow Minister for Public Safety, Official Opposition
Blaine Calkins, Shadow Minister for Hunting, Fishing & Conservation, Official Opposition
Bob Zimmer, Shadow Minister Northern Affairs & Arctic Sovereignty, Official Opposition