



LEGISLATIVE RETURN

SUBMITTED BY: Hon. Ms. Frost, Minister of Environment

1. On November 23, 2020, Mr. Hassard, Leader of the Official Opposition

- asked the following question during the Oral Question Period at page(s) 1986 of *Hansard*
  - submitted the following written question – WQ No. \_\_\_\_\_
  - gave notice of the following motion for the production of papers – MPP No. \_\_\_\_\_
- RE: Semi-Automatic AR-10 Rifles Purchase

OR

2. This legislative return relates to a matter outstanding from discussion with (Member) \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ related to:

Bill No. \_\_\_\_\_  Second Reading  Third Reading  
 Committee of the Whole: (eg: Vote 15) \_\_\_\_\_

Motion No. \_\_\_\_\_ RE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 at page(s) \_\_\_\_\_ of *Hansard*.

The response is as follows:

The Rational for the purchase of 20 semi-automatic riffles by the Department of Environment is as follows:

Conservations officers are often first responders to a wide variety of high-risk human-wildlife conflicts, involving large animals such as bears and bison.

Conservation officers risk their own safety to protect the communities they serve. While they accept the job can be dangerous, every effort should be made to offer them the best protection in terms of equipment, training and support.

The currently issued bolt action rifle used by Conservation officers has been deemed sub-par in providing protection. In addition to being outdated in sighting and firing technology, these rifles lack available weapon lights, are difficult to modify or retrofit for fit (to meet officer stature and ergonomic requirements), and the support we receive from the manufacturer in maintenance and repair is inadequate. For these reasons, the Department of Environment was prompted to purchase new service firearms.

Issuing the new Sig Sauer, model 716 semi-automatic patrol rifle (.308 calibre) for service helps fulfill government's responsibility under occupational health and safety to keep officers safe, while also enhancing service for public safety.

Conservation officers are fully trained in the use of all firearms at the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy.

Based on a comprehensive analysis by the Firearms Instructor Group, the best viable alternative is to modernize to a semi-automatic patrol rifle.

The semi-automatic patrol rifle is a modern firearm that can fire more rounds accurately in

December 4, 2020  
Date

[Signature]  
Signature

The semi-automatic patrol rifle is a modern firearm that can fire more rounds accurately in serious life-threatening situations, keeping officers and members of the public safe.

Various platforms have been tested by Yukon conservation officers. Their reviews indicate the semi-automatic patrol rifle is easy to carry and provides quick and effective shot placement, making this model better suited to provide the necessary protection required in our public safety service. Especially, when responding to high-risk situations including dangerous wildlife, which on occasion has included charging Grizzly bears.

Testing considerations included: accuracy, availability, calibre, initial quality/fit/finish, shoot ability, reliability, ergonomics, capacity, optic options, sling options, ease of assembly/disassembly, stock adjustability, ambidextrous options, recoil, weight and manufacture support.

Possession and use of the Sig Sauer model 716 semi-automatic patrol rifle (.308 calibre) is now prohibited for public use by the Criminal Code. However, conservation officers are exempt from this prohibition under Section 117.07 (1) of the Criminal Code.

This federal exemption for law enforcement is in use across Canada. Saskatchewan conservation officers and a number of police agencies throughout the country are already using semi-automatic rifles. British Columbia Conservation Officer Service is currently piloting semi-automatic rifles and Alberta Fish and Wildlife is in the process of adopting semi-automatic rifles.

The Department of Environment awarded a contract on November 5, 2020 for the purchase and delivery of these patrol rifles, including training, at a cost of \$73,625. This purchase was approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Environmental Sustainability in accordance with authority under the Financial Administration Act.