

CANADIAN SHOOTING SPORTS ASSOCIATION / CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

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Harper government introduces firearms bill to cut red tape

Powassan ON – The Canadian Shooting Sports Association (CSSA) is pleased to support the Harper government's introduction of new laws that are both fair to firearms owners and safe for all Canadians.

The CSSA is committed to promoting heritage shooting activities and maintaining public safety across Canada. Our association has consulted with Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney who has introduced new legislation to cut red tape for responsible firearms owners.

While seeking a more permanent solution, the minister has passed an amnesty to permit trustworthy Canadians to own, transport and use Swiss Arms and CZ-858 rifles that were lawfully purchased. Minister Blaney also announced the *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act* to alter unfair and useless laws introduced by previous anti-gun governments. CSSA and the Canadian Institute for Legislative Action (CILA) executive director Tony Bernardo says the minister's initiatives are an excellent interim step toward fair and safe gun laws in Canada.

"The CSSA is pleased that Minister Blaney has taken a direction to introduce fair play for all Canadians," explains Bernardo. "The shooting sports community has grown impatient waiting for positive legislation that stops treating responsible firearms owners like potential criminals. These changes reaffirm that legal firearms owners are worthy of the public's trust. Canadians should be proud to restore these rights instead of treating firearms owners as villains.

"The Minister understands that firearms ownership is a right and a responsibility," adds Bernardo. "Meanwhile, lawful gun owners have been paying the price for the actions of a few bad people who used guns for evil. Draconian laws only affect the law abiding, and merely pretends to increase public safety. We are a breed far apart from those criminals who commit gun crimes and this new Act recognizes that difference."

The new *Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act* is poised to:

- Merge the Possession Only License (POL) and the Possession and Acquisition license (PAL)
- End the Authorization to Transport system for target shooting
- Restrict the ability of Chief Firearms Officers (CFO's) to make arbitrary decisions
- Create a grace period at the end of a five-year license expiry to prevent criminal charges for expired paperwork
- Create mandatory firearms safety courses for first time gun owners
- Strengthen firearms prohibitions for those who are convicted of domestic violence offences

Bernardo says proponents of gun controls will try to suggest that any changes will somehow threaten Canadians, but as usual, they will not be able to explain why. "The anti-gun groups said the sky would fall if the government scrapped the useless long-gun registry," explains Bernardo. "As we all know, gun crime has continued its decades-long decline since the registry was abandoned more than two years ago. As well, reducing the arbitrary power of CFOs is a huge win for gun owners because we won't have to endure whimsical rules conjured up by these unelected, anti-gun civil servants.

"Gun owners comprise the most safety-conscious community in the country," he adds. "That's why insurance at shooting ranges costs next to nothing. Every study shows that gun control laws do not reduce crime because criminals ignore them. With the federal election looming next year, parliamentary debates will show that other political parties want to take our firearms freedom away. Once these new laws receive Royal Assent, the choice for gun owners should be easier. If passed, this proposed legislation will represent a significant step forward for Canadian firearms owners."

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