

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



Ontario Conservation Centre

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OFAH FILE: 401
December 2, 2022

Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

SUBJECT: House of Commons Bill C-21 - *An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)*

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH) is Ontario's largest, non-profit, fish and wildlife conservation-based organization, representing 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 725 member clubs. I am writing to you today to express our concerns about the federal government's Bill C-21 and the recent introduction of amendments at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (SECU).

Hunting is a valued heritage activity, and we are very fortunate to have an abundance of healthy wildlife populations and hunting opportunities across the province. There are approximately 400,000 licensed hunters in Ontario, who collectively contributed \$4.7 billion to the province's GDP in 2018. It is also a very safe activity, with per-capita injury rates far below those of the most popular sports in Canada.

Bill C-21 is purportedly a public safety bill and includes a proposal to deem certain firearms as prohibited under the *Criminal Code*. When it was first introduced in the House of Commons in February 2021, Bill C-21 was not directly focused on the hunting community. But last week, amendments were proposed at the committee stage that will significantly broaden the definition of prohibited firearms. The changes directly impact hunters throughout Ontario and across Canada by unilaterally prohibiting several models of rifles and shotguns that are widely used for hunting by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples alike.

The OFAH has previously engaged your government in discussions about the implications of federal firearms policies for Ontarians, including the looming possibility of municipal firearms bans and the province's authority to curtail this threat.

We appreciate your government's ongoing support of the hunting community, and we are asking the Ontario government to voice its opposition to Bill C-21 with consideration for:

- The impact on Indigenous and non-Indigenous hunters and hunting-related businesses (e.g., importers, dealers, and firearm retailers, and hunting retailers, tourist outfitters) in Ontario;
- The finite capacity and competing priorities of police services that would be responsible for enforcing the prohibition; and,
- The need for resources to be used to directly reduce criminal use of guns and gun violence in Ontario.

Thank you for considering our request and we look forward to continued discussions about protecting fishing and hunting in Ontario.

Yours in Conservation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AL', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Angelo Lombardo
Executive Director

AL/jb

cc: Honourable Michael Kerzner, Solicitor General
Honourable Graydon Smith, Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry
OFAH Board of Directors
Matt DeMille, OFAH Director, Policy & Programs
Mark Ryckman, OFAH Manager, Policy