



FAXED

15 June 2006

Mr. Garry Breitkreuz, MP  
Yorkton-Melville  
House of Commons  
Room 452-D, Centre Block  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Breitkreuz:

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2006, and your appreciative comments about our audit of the Canadian Firearms Program. I was pleased to meet with members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety on 31 May and to answer their questions. Your letter included some additional questions, which I will answer here.

You asked what evidence we have seen that the firearms program has contributed more to public safety and saved more lives than the system that preceded it. Neither of these issues was included in the scope of our audit; they are more in the domain of program evaluation, which our Office does not undertake. Doing so is a management responsibility; we noted in our Report that management has not carried out an evaluation of the program. The topic of your second question—determining which gun control measures work and which ones don't—is also a program evaluation activity and the responsibility of management. Your Committee may wish to investigate what avenues it may have to pursue this matter with the Canada Firearms Centre.

In reference to your third question on whether we have seen any evidence that the government intends to comply with its regulatory policy and disclose the program's compliance costs and enforcement costs, we did not address this issue in our follow-up. The information would have to be obtained from the government.

Regarding your question about our access to the cost-benefit analysis, the audit team did seek access to certain reports but was advised that they were Cabinet confidences of a type that is not accessible by the Office of the Auditor General. We did not seek access to the 1999 Economic Impact Study. The designation of these documents as Cabinet confidences restricts our access to them.

Finally, the audit team's review of indirect costs was limited to the departments that reported costs in their performance reports.

I hope this information answers your questions. We are pleased to consider questions on any matters that lie within our mandate.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Fraser, FCA