

Cold lake

Ron Ashmore <rashmore@kawarthalakes.ca>

Fri 6/26/2020 5:51 PM

Sent Items

To: Ron Ashmore <rashmore@kawarthalakes.ca>;

NEWS RELEASE

June 26, 2020

For immediate release

City council voices opposition to federal gun ban

Cold Lake, AB – Cold Lake City Council has voted to voice its opposition to the federal government's decision to ban a number of firearms, and the planned buy-back program associated with the ban.

The decision was made after a notice of motion was tabled by Councillor Kirk Soroka at city council's June 9, 2020 Regular Meeting. A resolution put forward in the notice of motion was debated and passed at council's regular meeting this week.

"Council debated if this was an issue that we, as a municipality, wanted to wade into," Mayor Craig Copeland said. "Ultimately, we felt that the federal government's gun ban will be an expensive exercise that will only serve to take law abiding people's property, while doing nothing to reduce crime. Municipalities are the level of government closest to the people, and a large part of our budget and operations is focused on providing safe and healthy communities. We see forecasts of hundreds of millions of federal dollars to be spent to buy guns back from people. As these are people who went through the necessary education, background checks, and licencing to purchase them, it seems to be a poorly thought out plan, especially if its aim is to reduce crime."

Council noted that the money earmarked to purchase the legally obtained firearms could be better put to use funding crime reduction strategies, for economic stimulus, or emergency aid as part of the COVID-19 response.

"We have not seen the full impact that the COVID-19 economic shutdown will cause, our economy was already reeling from the challenges being experienced in the oil patch, and crime has increasingly been an issue for our residents throughout this region," Copeland said. "With very limited resources, we work closely with police and peace officers, the social services community, and public stakeholders on strategies to reduce crime and to protect our residents from the crime that does occur. The announcement of an expensive, far-reaching program targeted at law-abiding citizens in the name of crime reduction is something our council hopes other municipalities will voice opposition to."

The City of Cold Lake's resolution will be sent to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Bill Blair, as well as the Attorney General's Office, the Official Opposition, and provincial representatives. Council's motion also calls on administration to share the resolution with municipalities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba for their consideration.

"On top of our council's concerns with the gun ban, the federal government continues to drag the City of Cold Lake through the courts as it refuses to honour its own legislation regarding payment in lieu of taxes for federal property," Copeland said. "The federal government is more than \$20 million in arrears to the City of Cold Lake – a community of just under 15,000 people. Perhaps the federal government should honour its own legislation and help municipalities fund services such as police, crime reduction strategies, and social programs. Instead, the feds will spend untold millions more to buy legally owned guns from Canadians who have committed no crime."

- 30 -

Sent from my Samsung Galaxy smartphone.