



RE: Bill C-21 and its impact on the Airsoft Community

To the members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security:

We are writing you to discuss the impact of Bill C-21 *“An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms)”* on the sport of Airsoft and to propose potential solutions to the problem at hand.

The Airsoft Association of British Columbia (AABC) is a non-profit organization that has been founded to represent the players of Airsoft in our province. We seek the growth of our sport through responsible play, safety and education of our players and the public.

Our directors, regional representatives, and players have all experience in hosting, running, and playing in games of all sizes that often occur on rural properties with stringent safety requirements spurring tourism income that can fill resorts with hundreds of Airsofters. This sport not only builds lifelong friendships and strengthens family, but also spurs entrepreneurial spirit. The largest retailers in Canada for high end Airsoft Equipment are family run small businesses that thrive through their hard work and expertise by so many years spent in the sport.

The inclusion of Airsoft in Bill C-21, as it stands, will ensure the end of our sport in Canada. The bill, as written, will designate most non-controlled firearms (Airsoft, BB Guns, Pellet Guns, etc.) as replicas and as such they will be deemed Prohibited Devices to purchase, import or manufacture within Canada. While it would allow players to keep existing devices, it would render the stock of all Canadian Retailers useless material that would most likely have to be destroyed to comply with the new law.

As Airsoft Devices would now be considered prohibited devices, it could be difficult to prove the origin of the device or when it was purchased. This could lead to situations where Police forces could seize any Airsoft Devices in any interaction with an Airsoft player without any mechanism for compensation or recourse.

The reclassification of most Airsoft Devices will impact our players, communities, businesses and directly impact film which is a large part of British Columbia’s economy. Airsoft has provided an excellent alternative to using real firearms on set ensuring the safety of cast and crew from potential accidents. Not only will studios incur greater expenses by having to hire armourers to assist with Firearms on productions, but it will ensure that more firearms will have to be purchased and imported to keep up with demand. We believe that Airsoft has a place in film to ensure safety while also maintaining the required suspension of disbelief.

We recognize that there are legitimate Public Safety concerns with Airsoft and stand in joint position with Airsoft in Canada (ASIC) and the Federation Sportive d’Airsoft du Quebec (FSAQ) with the following solutions:

- **Access Control by Age Limitations** – an 18+ limit for the purchase of any Airsoft Device in Canada.
- **Safe Storage and Transportation** – during transportation, all Airsoft Devices must be stored in an opaque sturdy container so that they will not be accidentally seen by members of the public.
- **Safety Waivers / Stickers** – before a device can be purchased, a waiver must be signed indicating the very real dangers of owning an Airsoft device if used improperly and “cigarette” style stickers on the box to provide a constant reminder.
- **Orange Tips on Airsoft Devices** – to further differentiate Airsoft Devices during transport, they could be required to have a brightly coloured tip.

We also recommend:

- **Membership in an Airsoft Association** - To purchase an Airsoft Device a person must be a member of an Association, Organization or Club in their province of residence that is dedicated to the safe and responsible practice of Airsoft.

These solutions would minimize the level of negative police interactions by members of our community by ensuring that all players are educated on the risk at the point of sale. It would further ensure that there would be no accidental confusion or fear by a member of the public, as a device would be securely stored and transported to a players local Airsoft field or facility.

We recommend membership in an Airsoft Association, as it would naturally create a democratic self-regulatory body that is focused on the practice of our sport through safe and responsible play while focusing on good governance and education. It would also provide an extra roadblock for any nefarious individuals who would want to misuse an Airsoft Device intentionally.

The AABC believes that we should seek to incorporate some, if not all, of the above solutions to ensure public safety. However, with consultation with legal professionals we do understand that the scope of this bill may not allow the amendment to include such sweeping measures. To that end if it is not possible, we highly recommend the sections amending 84(1) and 84(3.2) be removed from Bill C-21 and the Government work with the Airsoft community to develop a comprehensive solution instead of passing something that will decimate our sport and industry within Canada.

We look forward to a bright future for Airsoft in Canada with your assistance.

Authored By:



Justin Kirkwood
President
Airsoft Association of British Columbia