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CN POLICE REFUSE TO PROVIDE FIREARMS STATISTICS ON THEIR GUNS DEFYING PRIME MINISTER'S PROMISES FOR OPEN AND TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT

By Dennis R. Young – October 12, 2018

The RCMP, Public Safety Canada, and the Department of Justice have no knowledge or control over the federal departments and agencies that own and use firearms. Consequently, I filed Access to Information Act requests with the twelve federal departments and agencies asking for statistics on the firearms they have in their possession and their policies and procedures for complying with federal firearms legislation and the *Criminal Code of Canada*.

Eleven of the twelve federal departments and agencies who received my request are processing my requests with the exception of the CN Police. In fact, Parks Canada and both Departments of Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs have even completed the processing of my requests.

The CN Police refused to provide their firearms statistics and policies citing the information was privileged and protected under Canada's privacy laws. I filed a complaint with the Office of the Information Commissioner because it was clear to me that my rights to simple statistics and CN Police firearms policies under the *Access to Information Act* were being denied because none of the information requested was private, personal or privileged.

My complaint seemed pretty straight forward until yesterday, when I received a confusing reply from an Investigator with the Office of the Information Commissioner agreeing with the CN Police. The Investigator disagreed with my claim that my rights were being denied under the *Access to Information Act* and referred my complaint to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner.

During the last election and during the early days of the Justin Trudeau administration great promises were made about a new era of openness and transparency and access to information held by government departments. I guess the CN Police didn't get the message.

It is ridiculous that an agency of the federal government can refuse to process an *Access to Information Act request* for simple statistics simply by declaring the information is 'privileged' and even more ridiculous that an Investigator in the Office of the Information Commissioner agrees with them. If the statistical information and policy directives are privileged, why haven't the other eleven federal departments and agencies processing my requests for the same statistics made similar claims? And if there isn't anything in the *Access to Information Act* that can force a federal department or agency to process a simple ATIP request. Prime Minister Trudeau should enact his promise immediately: "We will expand the role of the Information Commissioner, giving them the power to issue binding orders for disclosure."