

# **Police would lose 'investigative tool' if gun registry scrapped**

By Chris Thompson, The Windsor Star

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**WINDSOR, Ont. -- Windsor police fear the loss of a useful tool should they federal long gun registry be scrapped, but local sportsmen say its pending demise is long overdue.**

**"It is used on a regular basis by us," said Windsor police spokesman Sgt. Brett Corey.**

**"We do use it as an investigative tool. It is a very important investigative tool for us."**

**Corey said the existence of the gun registry makes gun owners more responsible for their firearms, their storage and lending them out.**

**"What it does is it makes the gun owner accountable for that weapon," said Corey.**

**"It forces people to keep track of serial numbers."**

**Corey said it is not uncommon for guns to be stolen in break and enters and having them logged can allow police to track the weapon back if it is later recovered.**

**Another scenario where the gun registry is an invaluable tool for police is when they are called to an address for someone who may be in mental distress.**

**If there are guns in the home, they know before they arrive.**

**"It's an officer safety issue for sure," said Corey.**

**"If we are called to a place and we get inside, if we know someone has five guns and we only find four, we know there is another one out there."**

**The potential loss of the gun registry has been criticized by police departments across the country.**

**"Essentially from a police point of view this registry is an important tool for us in tracking these guns and the accountability of the owners for them," said Corey.**

**But Wayne Fields, the LaSalle past president of the defunct Law-Abiding Unregistered Firearms Association (LUFA), said he doubts even half of the guns in the country were ever registered with the registry.**

**"I think they underestimated the power of the firearms community," said Fields, who never did register any of the guns he owns.**

**"We are several million strong."**

**Fields said the registry, which was brought in by the Chretien Liberal government a decade ago, was nothing but a major boondoggle from the start.**

**"There was a lot of non-compliance out there," said Fields.**

**"I still think half the guns aren't registered."**

**Fields noted that the registry fee fluctuated and was actually waived for a time by the Liberal government.**

**"They were desperate," said Fields.**

**Despite Wednesday's vote that indicates the possible end of the registry, Fields said he'll believe it when it finally happens.**

He said the Coalition for Gun Control will step up their efforts to preserve the registry and lobby MPs, just as they lobbied for its creation.

"They're the culprits that cost us \$2 billion," said Fields.

Greg Rossyan, president of the Windsor Sportsmens Club on Dougall Avenue, said taxpayers should be happy when the program ends.

"I'd sure love to find out what they're going to do with the money," said Rossyan.

"Are they going to reimburse people?"

Rossyan said he would like to see the federal government pass the money on to the provinces to invest in more conservation officers to keep an eye on hunting regulation compliance.

"They've cut back Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) officers so much in Ontario," said Rossyan.

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