

MEDIA RELEASE: SA HUNTERS AND GAME CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Hunters and sport shooters welcome extension for comment on Firearms Control Amendment Bill

The South African Hunters and Game Conservation Association (SA Hunters) has welcomed the additional 21 working days granted by the Pretoria High Court on 30 June 2021, that will allow more time to comment on the Draft Firearms Amendment Bill. This gives the public until 3 August to submit comment. The initial deadline for comment was 4 July 2021.

The extension of 21 working days follows on a successful application filed by the SA Arms and Ammunition Dealers Association (SAADA) supported by the Confederation of Hunting Associations of SA (CHASA). SAADA and CHASA asked the court to extend the period for comment to allow the public sufficient time to study information purportedly used in drafting the Firearms Amendment Bill. This information was only released to the public on 25 June 2021, giving interested persons only a short time (45 days) to study it in the context of the proposed amendments and to prepare comments, which were initially due on 4 July.

Fred Camphor, CEO of SA Hunters, welcomes the additional 21 working days that the Court has granted. "The proposed amendments are far-reaching and affect numerous sections of the Act. However, our main concern is that the intention of the Amendment Bill is clearly to restrict citizens' access to firearms as opposed to the current Act aimed at enhancing citizens' constitutional rights to life and bodily integrity. Therefore, it is an 180-degree turnaround from enabling legislation to disabling legislation."

Other proposed amendments of concern to SA Hunters include:

- removing the right to own a firearm for self-defence
- limiting the number of firearms and ammunition that dedicated hunters and sport shooters may own in terms of Section 16
- expanding and redefining ballistic sampling practices that are unfeasible and impractical
- changing competency compliance for firearm ownership
- prohibiting the reloading of ammunition by firearm owners for their own use

SA Hunters has simplified the most important proposed amendments in easy-to-understand information sheets, petitions, and pro forma comments that are readily available on its website (<https://www.sahunters.co.za/index.php/firearms-control-amendment-2021>) to anyone who wishes to find out more about the full impact of the amendments, or who wants to draft their own comment for submission to the Secretariat for the Police by 3 August.

"We congratulate SAADA and CHASA on their successful court application, which benefits every South African that believes in the right to own a firearm and supports our constitutional right to life and bodily integrity. It is crucial that all reasonable and responsible South Africans stand up for their rights and make their voices heard," Camphor said.

The end