

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING : 19 October 2015

IMMIGRATION AND BORDER PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

(SE15/090) - Firearms - Programme 1.2: Border Management

Senator McKenzie, Bridget (L&CA) written:

- 1) What is the usual process for inspecting firearm shipments?
- 2) What resources does the Department provide for this process?
- 3) What are the resources of Customs/Border Force to inspect firearms at the border? Have they been adequate to meet demand according to Customs/Border Force KPIs?
- 4) How much does it cost to process a firearm through customs?
- 5) What resources, if any, have firearms importers provided in the past or do currently provide, towards this inspection process?
- 6) Has Customs ever placed the administrative burden on commercial businesses to assist Customs to inspect and process firearms through customs?
- 7) What are Customs/Border Force's priorities in terms of the spreading of personnel across assigned tasks?

Answer:

1. Firearms are collected by the ABF at the border and placed into a secure vault pending permits being produced by the importers. Safety testing and formal entry documentation is completed by the ABF officers. The dealer then arranges collection of the firearms and payment of any duties and taxes for the goods to be released. The ABF provides the firearm serial numbers to the State Police for registration.
2. Between two to four officers may be involved in each inspection depending on the size of the consignment.
3. Between two to four ABF officers may be involved in each inspection depending on the size of the consignment.
4. The cost for the ABF to process a firearm varies depending on a number of factors including location, value and volumes.
5. Commercial firearm importers provide the ABF with facilities including a secure room to conduct inspections, labour for larger shipments and amenities for ABF officers to utilise, such as kitchen and bathroom facilities.

6. The ABF does not directly pass on any administrative burden, however both commercial and private importers undertake the following activities that may incur administrative costs:
 - Completion of documentation to import firearms;
 - Arrangements for a credentialed gunsmith to make safety modifications if the firearm does not pass inspection; and
 - Freight if required.

7. The ABF's resourcing model provides for the flexible deployment of staff across the Regional Commands to meet operational priorities. The Regional Commanders are responsible for coordinating the deployment of resources to the highest priority tasking to achieve operational outcomes in the aviation, maritime, remote, compliance and detention environments.