Thank you for responding to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee’s Call for Evidence on the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Bill. All submissions will be examined and considered as part of the Committee’s scrutiny of the Bill.

Please be aware that questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer before you can submit the form.

Follow the Local Government and Regeneration Committee’s Twitter feed all Committee tweets on this Bill will have the hashtag #awlbill.

*1. Please supply your name and contact details:

Name: Steven Wolf

Organisation:

Address 1:
Address 2:

City/Town:

Postcode:
Country:

Email address (if no email leave blank):

Phone Number:

Office Use Only

Submission ID number
2. Please confirm that you have read and understood the Scottish Parliaments “Policy on the treatment of written evidence by subject and mandatory committees”:

* Yes

3. Please confirm whether you are content for your name to be published with your submission:

☒ Yes

4. Which of the three categories below best describes your interest in the Bill (please tick only one)?

* Personal

☐ Professional

☐ Commercial

5. Do you wish your email to be added to the Committee’s distribution list for updates on progress of the Bill:

* Yes
6. Invitations to give oral evidence to the Committee on the Bill will be based on the submissions received. If you wish your submission to be included amongst those considered for possible invitation to give oral evidence, please indicate here.

☐ Yes

x No

7. You may answer questions on the entire Bill, or on any part of the Bill. Please indicate which parts of the Bill you are responding to? (You may select as many options that apply).

☐ All of the Bill

☐ Equalities, climate change and other Scottish Government objectives

x Air Weapons

☐ General licensing issues

☐ Alcohol licensing
☐ Civic licensing – taxi/private hire car licensing

☐ Civic licensing – scrap metal dealers

☐ Civic licensing – theatre licensing

☐ Civic licensing – sexual entertainment venues
1. Air Weapons Licensing

You may respond to all the questions or only those you have a specific interest in. (Text boxes have no word limit, they will increase in size accordingly).

13. In what ways will the creation of an air weapons licensing system in Scotland contribute to preserving public order and safety, reducing crime and advancing public health policy?

It will not reduce crime at all since criminals will not register their air guns. All it will do is penalise law abiding airgun owners with higher fees, having to join a club, restrictions in lawful use and a reduction in airgun ownership. All countries which have implemented some form of gun or airgun licensing regime or another has not seen a reduction in gun crime. We only have to look at the Handgun ban in 1997 to see how handgun crime has actually gone up after the ban. Similar things will happen if this licensing regime for low powered airguns is introduced.

14. Is there sufficient provision, or sufficient capacity to provide, suitable numbers of air weapons clubs across all areas of Scotland for use by registered air weapons owners/users?

No there isn’t. Half a million airguns with a lot of owners. The new bill doesn’t allow for the gun to be shot in the back garden in what is termed as “plinking” so tens of thousands of people will have to join an airgun or a gun club, for which there is no capacity. This will effectively result in a de-facto ban on some airgun owners, who either can’t afford to join an airgun club or who live too far away from one to be economically viable to join one. Think of someone living in the Scottish highlands, who will be in a ridiculous position of having to travel say 100 miles to an airgun club to use their airgun while being prohibited from shooting on their land, in a remote location with the nearest neighbour tens of miles away. Effectively legislation like this will likely be ignored, meaning extra police will have to be drafted to prosecute this new “criminal class”. Law abiding people who their only fault is owning some inanimate object without some license.

15. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those using air weapons for personal/recreational use?
In a bad way. It will:

- restrict where you can use the airgun, no garden plinking
- increase cost due to having to join airgun club.
- make airgun shooting harder for people in remote areas.
- double the paperwork load on police departments for licensing.
- create a new class of criminal overnight. People who might not be aware of the law or might disagree with the law will be prosecuted for daring to own an inanimate object without a license.
- make it harder for youngsters to get into the sport.

16. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those aged 14 to 17 who use air weapons?

It would restrict their participation depending on what age groups a license will be issued to. In the rest of the UK (England, Wales and Northern Ireland), an airgun cannot be bought or possessed by anyone over 18, with an adult needed to be present to supervise people under this age.

This will put a strain on youngsters starting shooting with airguns. Since shooting with airguns from a young age leads onto further shooting in later years with more powerful firearms, this licensing regime for airguns will impact real gun ownership in Scotland in the future. Youngsters not applying for airgun licenses due to cost/hassle will unlikely use shotguns or rifles in the future when they become adults. This licensing regime is a calculated stifling of not just air gun ownership but future firearm ownership in Scotland and that is outrageous!
17. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those using air weapons for commercial/professional reasons (for example: for pest control; as part of the tourist/hunting season; as part of fairs, paintballing centre, entertainment sector etc.)?

Firstly with a license, it will mean that the police will have to approve each bit of land that a license holder wants to shoot over. Until that is done, to shoot on that land with an airgun will be breaking the law which will lead to airgun license revocation, penalties and even prison time.

This will impact of course commercial shooting on farmland where often farmers who only control small game such as rats/pigeon will have to get a license to control the same vermin they have done safely and lawfully without a license. This will of course increase their costs.

Airgun ranges operating for tourists might not be able to do so hassle free, due to the fact that they will have strict guidelines to obey and all shooters might have to join a club as probationary members rather than have an informal shoot with air rifles or pistols in a controlled environment.

18. How will the air weapons licensing system affect those using air weapons for competitive sporting purposes?

It will affect Scotland in the future when youngsters will find it much harder to start up airgun shooting than before the licensing regime. With a drying pool of young talent, less scottish people will take up shooting sports therefore ensuring less sports shooters in the future.

19. Is it equitable for those applying for an air weapons certificate to pay a fee which cannot be refundable irrespective of whether a certificate is granted or not?

No a fee should be refunded if a license is not granted. However I already said that I am against this licensing proposal.
20. Will the air weapons licensing system have a positive or negative impact on other areas of the public sector in Scotland (eg. The work of local government, public agencies etc.)?

Negative effect. More work for police both in licensing and in prosecuting which were otherwise law abiding people. Police already are short staffed when dealing with the current system for shotgun and firearm licenses. What is going to happen when an estimated 50-100 thousand people apply for an airgun license? More work for courts and the judiciary when people get refused an airgun license and decide to fight the decision in the court to get one issued.

21. What, if any, might the unintended consequences of introducing an air weapons licensing system in Scotland be?

All of the above I mentioned, not to mention people might just give up airgun shooting and just apply for a shotgun or firearms license instead, if the hassle for applying for one will be the same. I know the Scottish Parliament is generally anti-gun so I am sure they would not like it if due to the fact that they will introduce an airgun licensing system as they say for public safety. Well that will spectacularly backfire if instead people will apply for more powerful guns.
22. Do you have any other comments to make on air weapons licensing aspects of the Bill?

I am totally against it and I believe that Mr Kenny McAskill doesn't give a damn what the people of the UK think. I have personally written to all the Scottish Parliament on this issue. They have said to me concerning this consultation: Most replies against the previous consultation were from England and this shows that the 87% of people against the licensing regime is not based on pure scottish support. I say this:

Scotland is still part of the United Kingdom and until they vote for independence I will consider myself BRITISH first and Scottish second so of course it matters if English people post their opinion on this Bill. Also the licensing regime wants to introduce visitor permits for people from England, Wales or Northern Ireland visiting Scotland with airguns, therefore they have just as much right to comment on this Bill since it will impact them directly.

Last and not least, me being a libertarian I am actually against all gun licensing I believe that airgun and gun control is not about airguns or real guns, ITS ABOUT CONTROL!

That is all I have to say, thank you very much for reading this!