

23 DEC 2022

To the Citizens of Pacific County,

In the interest of properly informing the people of Pacific County, I find it necessary to address the recent Chinook Observer article titled "County denies sheriff-elect's move to buy military-grade rifles" accessed 23 DEC 2022 at noon on chinookobserver.com.

First, semi-automatic AR-15 style patrol rifles are currently issued to the deputies. Pacific County Sheriff's Office current policy allows for deputies to deploy their patrol rifles whenever they expect to encounter armed resistance, need to take exceptionally accurate shots, or expect armed and dangerous suspects to be utilizing body armor or barricades for cover, among many other examples. There has been no dispute over the utility and purpose of a patrol rifle.

Second, the new rifle model in question has "LE" in the name. This stands for "Law Enforcement." This is distinct from the MIL (military) and CIV (civilian) versions available. With even the most cursory of research, it appears that if one were to "grade" these rifles, perhaps "military-grade" is a misnomer, and "law-enforcement grade" would be more appropriate. Titling the article "County denies sheriff-elect's move to buy law enforcement rifles" certainly lacks the eye-catching appeal it currently has, however. This is a sensationalist headline that feeds off the national divide between law enforcement and civilians that I seek to narrow and ultimately close here in Pacific County.

Third, short-barreled rifles are exceedingly common for a wide variety of reasons but primarily due to their maneuverability. The term "CQB" is referenced in the article, without any explanation other than what each letter stands for. CQB is a military term to distinguish traditional military operations (such as rural patrolling) where engagement distances can exceed 300 meters, from close-in engagements, such as in or around buildings or towns. If one were to apply that military term to law enforcement, it would be difficult to imagine any realistic or responsible scenario in which a Deputy would be deploying a rifle *outside* of CQB ranges, making a short-barreled rifle the most appropriate choice.

The article states that the Sheriff's Office says that the "Deputies have sufficient weapons." Perhaps the most appropriate individual to provide an assessment on the sufficiency of the current rifles would be the Firearms Program Manager, Deputy Cory Nacnac. According to Deputy Nacnac:

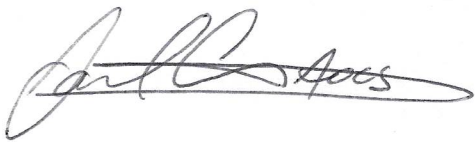
*"The current state of the patrol rifles within the Office is frankly unsatisfactory and negligent. The ammunition provided for duty is a practice ammo (even labeled as such on the box), that has a high degree of likelihood of passing through the intended target and potentially into bystanders should a patrol rifle be deployed on a call. This is dangerous to the public, and we are the only agency to my knowledge that issues this type of ammunition for duty. Some of the deputies have been issued lower receivers that are over 50 years old, and do not reliably lock a magazine into the magazine well, among other issues. My intention is to standardize the rifles that everyone carries and issue a more appropriate duty ammo that works with these rifles in order to mitigate some of the risk to the public."*

Deputy Nacnac stated that Sheriff Souvenir agreed with his assessment of the program and had agreed that the rifle/ammunition system needed replaced. Deputy Nacnac also stated that he had intended to sell over 40 excess firearms that Sheriff Souvenir had in the inventory in order to partially fund the transition to more appropriate rifles. Upon Sheriff Souvenir losing the election, Deputy Nacnac stated "everything ground to a halt and he [Sheriff Souvenir] just stopped responding to any correspondence."

Suppressors were also requested. It is worth noting that according to The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the noise from a single gunshot can range from 140 to 170 decibels, while a single impulse noise (gunshot) above 140 decibels is enough to cause permanent hearing loss (NIHL). Bystanders are more likely to suffer auditory injuries, as they are unable to anticipate the impulse noise and are unlikely to be equipped with hearing protection. Currently, law enforcement officers are 1.4 times more likely to experience NIHL than the general public, likely due to regular exposure to impulse noises during firearms training. One of the conclusions drawn from a 2013 study from the Center for Disease Control - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is that "firearms suppressors should be utilized whenever possible to further reduce the sound pressure exposures these officers are receiving." As someone with tinnitus and hearing loss from a career in the armed forces, I would like to do everything I can to save deputies and the public from auditory injuries.

Finally, it should be noted that the use of the term "semi-automatic assault rifle" when describing the proposed new rifles and "law enforcement-style" when describing the old rifles is misleading, at best. The rifles are functionally identical, but the new rifles would be optimized for a duty ammunition that greatly reduces the risk of bullets passing through targets causing collateral damage and further endangering the public. The denied request that is the subject of the Chinook Observer article was a request to the commissioners to explain these facts in order to determine if there was budget left to cover the cost for 2022.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Garcia", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Garcia