

From: WSP
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2011
To: All Legislators
Subject: Letter from WSP to Gun Dealers (AR-15 Rifle)

Good afternoon,

You all have likely received e-mails and/or phone calls from constituents who are questioning why the Washington State Patrol is inquiring about recent gun sales, specifically involving AR-15 rifles.

The WSP has a rifle that is unaccounted for from our inventory and we cannot discount the possibility that it was stolen. Out of an abundance of caution, we opened a criminal investigation and entered the weapon into the statewide computer system as stolen.

As we do in virtually every investigation, we sought information from people we considered knowledgeable, in this case, licensed gun dealers. The letter to dealers was simply a request for cooperation, and there is no legal requirement for the dealers to provide such information. This is no different than when we canvass the area of a crime seeking information that may assist in solving the case.

We clearly have caused concern as to our intentions with those involved in gun sales. We sincerely regret any alarm that was caused or confusion about our motive. We are not creating any sort of registry of these transactions; we are merely trying to solve this specific case.

We are still interested in receiving information about this missing weapon, and are asking anyone who has knowledge of unusual transactions, involving AR-15s or their components to provide that information to the WSP.

Our Criminal Investigation Division is working with the National Rifle Association (NRA) to provide clarification regarding the initial letter and the reasoning behind the request. We hope that resolves the concern from the NRA and puts their members at ease. We are also actively engaged with the media on this topic in an effort to provide transparency.

Thank you,

Captain Jason Berry
Government and Media Relations