



City of Campbell River
From the Office of the Mayor

February 2, 2024

The Honourable Minister Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Via email: PSSG.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Dear Minister Farnworth,

Re: Community Safety Act and Community Safety Amendment Act

You recently received a letter from the Mayor of Fort St. John, Lilia Hansen, highlighting crime-related challenges in their community stemming from specific properties. Mayor Hansen recounts a specific case where a much-loved community space has become the center of frightening and unsettling incidents and asks the Province to reconsider the *Community Safety Act and Community Safety Amendment Act* to help address challenges such as these.

Mayor Hansen's letter resonated with Campbell River City Council, as we tragically see similarities within our own community. Like Fort St. John, Campbell River has experienced a rise in criminal and illegal activity and associated threats to public safety from specific properties. These properties can be a hub for organized crime and drug trafficking, opioid use and sadly deaths, and weapons-related violence, and they serve to undermine the sense of safety and wellbeing of immediate neighbors and the wider community. Despite police, bylaw and fire services interventions, the challenges with these properties persist and escalate over time if left unchecked, as we have seen here in Campbell River. As Mayor Hansen relates, the compounding risks can lead to tragedy and leave local governments wondering why there aren't more tools available.

The province of BC previously drafted the *Community Safety Act and Community Safety Amendment Act*, similar to legislation which is in force in several Canadian provinces and the Yukon. The powers within this legislation are an effective and reasonable response from provincial authorities to chronic and illegal behavior from problem properties. To echo the words of Mayor Hansen, it is frustrating and disheartening that the tools set out in this Act are not available to local governments, and as a result, we are unable to address the community safety challenges we face today.

We feel compelled to add the City's voice to the call for stronger support from the Province to better meet persistent threats of crime and disorder within our local communities. We ask you to consider bringing into force the *Community Safety Act* and *Community Safety Amendment Act* along with the necessary law enforcement resources to effectively implement such legislation. If this is not possible, we request that the Province look at other effective tools and interventions which could help us respond to problem properties in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Dahl', with a stylized, cursive flourish at the end.

Kermit Dahl
Mayor