



April 7, 2025

RE: City of Prince George City Manager's report on the recommendations made by the Advisory Committee on Bear Awareness

Dear Mayor Yu and Councilors:

As a member of the City of Prince George's Advisory Committee on Bear Awareness, convened in 2024, I would like to express my appreciation for the City Manager's thorough consideration of our committee's recommendations. I also urge the Mayor and Council to take into account the larger economic and social costs associated with the current high rate of human-bear conflict when reviewing our suggestions.

In addition to the estimates provided in the City Manager's report, it is essential to assess the financial burden on taxpayers resulting from the ongoing elevated levels of human-bear conflict. For instance, how many garbage bins are commonly damaged by wildlife each year, and what is the cost of this damage? What are the expenses involved in cleaning up after a bear has rummaged through a bin on a city street or in a public park? What are the costs associated with deploying bylaw officers to address violations of city regulations regarding wildlife attractants?

I also ask the Council to reflect on the indirect costs linked to high rates of human-bear conflict. How does our city's reputation as the "deadliest city for bears" affect tourism, business owners, and other sectors reliant on the city's image? What are the implications for public safety and overall well-being? What financial burden does this situation impose on taxpayers, particularly when bylaw and Conservation Officers must devote their time and resources to bear management rather than other areas of enforcement?



While I recognize that some of these costs may be challenging to quantify precisely, they should still be factored into the evaluation of the committee's recommendations. It is important to remind the Mayor and Council that the year 2023, which saw 76 bears destroyed within city limits, was not an aberration or even a record but rather the peak of a long-term, cyclical pattern. For example, in 2010, 85 bears were destroyed in Prince George, while the numbers were 75 in 2001 and 80 in 1998. This trend suggests that, despite a decrease in conflicts in 2024, without new conflict prevention measures, we are likely to face another crisis similar to that of 2023.

Regarding the paper folding machine for the utility bills, the committee understood that a secondary insert was included in only one mailing. Therefore, there is an opportunity to include special messaging in the other mailings. The committee did not intend to suggest that a new folding machine was recommended; rather, they meant to imply that additional information could be included in the existing documents.

Furthermore, regarding the costs associated with implementing bear-resistant garbage bins, it has been suggested that this should be rolled out, prioritizing neighborhoods with high rates of conflict. The estimated cost of \$10 million is a total estimate, not the expenditure expected within a single fiscal year.

I urge the Mayor and Councilors to consider the long-term costs to taxpayers resulting from the current high rate of conflict when evaluating the estimated costs of the committee's recommendations. While I acknowledge that not all recommendations may be financially feasible at this time, it is crucial to weigh these costs against the potential savings from reduced rates of human-bear conflict.

Sincerely,

Lisa Cran

Lisa Cran

Treasurer, Northern Bear Awareness Society

Chairperson, City of Prince George Bear Awareness Committee 2024

5427 York Drive