

B88 Clean-Up of Needles and Other Harm Reduction Paraphernalia

Whereas the low barrier distribution of harm reduction supplies, including syringes and other safe injection supplies, in communities across BC poses a significant safety and cleanliness concern;

And whereas local governments, businesses and residents are bearing the escalating cost of cleaning up needles and drug paraphernalia in public spaces:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM request ongoing provincial funding to local governments to cover the cost of cleaning up needles and drug paraphernalia in their communities.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health (Ministry) recognizes that discarded used injecting equipment and other supplies associated with harm reduction supply distribution is a concern for some communities in the province. Discarded equipment can contribute to negative public perceptions about substance use programs and the populations they serve (i.e., people who use drugs), which can undermine the viability and sustainability of community-based harm reduction services. While the risk of transmission of blood-borne pathogens from discarded syringes is low, public concern about this issue can be high.

The Ministry is committed to supporting robust harm reduction programs, including effective reach of harm reduction supplies such as sterile syringes to groups and individuals who are vulnerable to drug-related harms such as HIV, hepatitis C and illicit drug overdose. Harm reduction is a globally recognized, evidence-based best practice for reducing health harms associated with substance use to individuals, communities, and society. However, as substance use and addiction are complex issues with a variety of factors that contribute to their incidence and prevalence, an effective response requires cooperation among partners from different levels of government and health or social systems.

In B.C., the [Harm Reduction Community Guide](#) provides guidance for municipalities to take a leadership and a facilitative role in supporting evidence-based public health services, thereby reducing the level of drug-related harm in their communities.

With respect to retrieval of used syringes, the Ministry endorses the position of the BC Centre for Disease Control and the Provincial Health Officer, which recommends engaging with clients through peer-based syringe recovery programs, installing sharps disposal bins in public spaces, and encouraging clients to return syringes to harm reduction distribution sites and health units. The Ministry recommends against syringe buy-back programs because there is no evidence that they are effective and they may cause unintended harm and consequences (e.g., increased risk of needle stick injury; risks associated with breaking into or removing community disposal boxes, and wastage).

The Ministry recognizes that this issue is not limited to one system or governmental jurisdiction, but instead requires cooperative effort to address across multiple systems and levels of government. Effective harm reduction supply recovery and disposal services require the participation of a variety of stakeholders, including harm reduction service providers, regional health authorities, business associations, community agencies, local and provincial governments, and individuals or associations of people who inject drugs. Local governments can play a key role in the development and sustainability of such partnerships.

To support these efforts, in September 2019, the Community Action Initiative (CAI) issued a call for proposals for municipal governments to access up to \$50,000 to address community wellness and harm

reduction issues, including syringe recovery and disposal. In total 34 applications were received and a robust adjudication process was completed in December 2019.

Our combined efforts will help ensure that B.C. communities are safe, healthy places to live, and that community concerns are addressed in a timely and effective manner.

B39 Southern Mountain Caribou

Whereas the population of the Southern Mountain Caribou herds in British Columbia has been declining;

And whereas the provincial and federal governments are reviewing whether the Southern Mountain Caribou should be protected by the Species at Risk Act;

And whereas application of the Act will directly affect both the recreational pursuits of local residents as well as the regional tourism and natural resource sectors;

And whereas municipal and regional district governments have not been given the opportunity to participate in public consultation discussions to date about the Southern Mountain Caribou and the potential implications of the application of the Species at Risk Act despite the significant impacts on local recreation, tourism, and resource sectors:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM advocate for the participation of municipal and regional district governments that are likely to be affected and that the provincial and federal governments begin a process of public consultation in regards to the potential application of the Species at Risk Act pertaining to the Southern Mountain Caribou and Boreal Caribou.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

Through the Provincial Caribou Recovery Program, the Government of B.C. has committed \$47 million over 5 years to support the recovery of this iconic species.

The Caribou Recovery Program is committed to ensuring that Indigenous Nations, local governments, stakeholders and the natural resource sector are able to participate in the planning and implementation of caribou recovery measures.

In March 2019, the Province began public engagement on the draft southern mountain caribou bilateral conservation agreement with Canada (section 11 agreement), as well as the draft partnership agreement between the Province, Canada, West Moberly First Nations and Saulneau First Nations for the conservation of the central group of the southern mountain caribou (partnership agreement).

On Nov. 29, 2019 the BC government hosted the Leaders Table meeting in Vancouver which included representatives from local government, the Peace River Regional District and industry. The goals of that meeting were to:

- Provide an inclusive and respectful forum where caribou-related issues can be discussed, constructive feedback is welcomed, and additional information can be gathered to help formulate positive solutions.
- Develop stronger working relationships between all participants to help maintain an open and mutually beneficial dialogue, and to foster a comprehensive exchange of ideas and information in future.

Participants discussed how best to move forward to implement the draft Partnership Agreement between the B.C. government, the federal government, West Moberly First Nations and Saulneau First Nations.

After the first Leaders' Table met in Fall 2019, we established several working groups to ensure local governments, First Nations, industry and other stakeholders are fully heard and involved in the work of caribou recovery.

- Snowmobile Advisory Committee will include local snowmobile clubs and local government and will work to ensure that any snowmobile management plans for the South Peace Region are informed with local input.
- The Caribou Recovery Related Land Use Objective Stakeholder Committee will include industry and local governments and will ensure local governments, industry and stakeholders are fully involved in the process of developing Caribou Recovery Related Land Use Objectives.
- The Socio-Economic Committee will include industry and local government and will review the work done by Big River Analytics and provide recommendations to BC and Canada on further analysis that is needed to understand the impacts of the Partnership Agreement and plan mitigation strategies.

B.C. is committed to engaging with communities through these working groups to address the concerns that have been raised to support the successful implementation of the Partnership Agreement.

B4 Proceeds of Crime

Whereas the provision of police services places a significant financial burden on local government;

And whereas the Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Crime Remediation Grant Program funds community crime reduction and crime prevention activities, but does not address local government policing costs, including expenditures related to investigations and police work that result in seizures of proceeds of crime:

Therefore be it resolved that the Province share seizures of proceeds of crime with local governments to help address protective services costs.

RESPONSE: Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Under British Columbia's *Police Act*, a municipality is responsible for its police services when its population exceeds 5,000 persons. These municipalities may form their own municipal police department, contract with an existing municipal police department, or contract with the provincial government for RCMP municipal police services.

Under the Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Program, the Provincial Government transfers 100 percent of net revenues from traffic violations to municipalities that are directly responsible for paying for policing. This provides municipalities additional funds to support community safety and address local policing priorities. Transfer grant amounts are based on a municipality's policing costs relative to the total policing costs paid by all municipalities. Rural communities and municipalities with populations under 5,000 benefit by receiving a reduction in the Police Tax they pay.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General supports community-based crime prevention and remediation programming through the Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Remediation Grant Program. This grant program provides one-time funding for crime prevention and remediation projects through the proceeds from the civil forfeiture process. Priority areas for grants are established on a year-by-year basis through consideration of government's current strategic priorities. Some of the funding streams from previous years include: Police Equipment and Training; Crime Reduction and Crime Prevention; Indigenous Healing and Rebuilding; Violence against Women – Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation and Vulnerable Women in the Sex Trade; and Restorative Justice. Since 2006, government has invested over \$43 million in B.C. communities through this grant program. Since 2016/17 \$1.8 million has been provided to police agencies for equipment and training needs. A call for applications for the program typically occurs annually each fall.