

March 11, 2021

File No. 7500-23 / 7500-25

Premier John Horgan
PO Box 9041
STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Horgan:

Re: Call for Public Inquiry: Stronger Sentencing for Prolific and Repeat Offenders

Despite repeated correspondence from the City of Williams Lake calling for stronger sentencing for prolific and repeat offenders, the judiciary has consistently failed to consider the threat to community safety resulting from their release into our community. Although the availability and proven effectiveness of the Electronic Monitoring Program is well known, prolific offenders are not consistently required to wear an ankle bracelet while on outstanding charges.

As a hub community in the Cariboo interior, Williams Lake is often a convenient location for offenders to remain and continue their unlawful activities. Council has argued that the interests of the public have received very little, if any, consideration during the sentencing process. Applying electronic monitoring devices still provides offenders with reasonably limited freedom; this technology does not compromise the safety of the public to the degree that releasing offenders, particularly repeat offenders, into the community without adequate monitoring does. Electronic monitoring upholds offenders' presumption of innocence, and only involves further policing should conditions not be adhered to. This is an efficient technological solution that is already available, and that Council has made a financial commitment to supporting.

Williams Lake residents have worked hard to combat crime in our community, and have come together to strive toward becoming a crime-free community. The judicial system is overburdened, due in large part to repeat offenders. We have continued to request the courts and judges to take into consideration the community appetite to see stricter penalties applied to these types of criminals, and that they not be released. **At Council's request, the possibility of a public inquiry to determine why so many prolific offenders with serious charges are constantly released into our community with ineffective deterrents to re-offend, is now being pursued by our MP and our MLA.**

The following resolution has been endorsed by Council and forwarded to the North Central Local Government Association as part of its ongoing lobbying efforts:

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WHEREAS Williams Lake has repeatedly called for stronger sentencing for prolific and repeat offenders being released into the community;

AND WHEREAS the judiciary has consistently failed to adequately ensure community safety when releasing prolific and repeat offenders on conditions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that NCLGA and UBCM petition the provincial and federal governments to enact legislative and regulatory changes to the criminal justice system to apply stricter penalties and ensure adequate incarceration of prolific criminals, including consistent use of electronic monitoring when released on conditions.

The City of Williams Lake is seeking public feedback to strengthen these efforts in the form of a survey, which went live on February 19, 2021. The questions include:

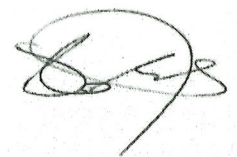
- Do you agree that repeat offenders for indictable offences such as theft over \$5000, break and enter, aggravated or sexual assault and murder should NOT be released while awaiting trial?
- Do you support prolific and repeat offenders with in excess of 50 charges being released back into your community on bail?
- Do you agree that when repeat offenders are released on conditions or probation, they should be required to wear an electronic monitoring device?
- Do you agree there needs to be an inquiry and review into the judicial and sentencing system?

At the time of this writing, over 600 responses have been received. The responses very clearly support stricter penalties and monitoring for prolific and repeat offenders (over 94%).

Working with our MP, Todd Doherty, and MLA, Lorne Doerkson, City of Williams Lake Council is formally requesting a public inquiry into this serious, ongoing issue. We are also seeking support from the Federal government.

I look forward to your response.

Yours truly,



Mayor Walt Cobb

c: MP Todd Doherty, Cariboo-Prince George
Minister Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety & Solicitor General
Minister David Eby, Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing
MLA Lorne Doerkson, Cariboo-Chilcotin
All British Columbia Municipalities and Regional Districts
Inspector Jeff Pelley, Williams Lake RCMP

