Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: JIBC Bylaw Enforcement Officer Program Review

I write to you today on behalf of the Licence Inspectors' and Bylaw Officers' Association of British Columbia (LIBOA) with respect to the above noted study that has recently been completed on our behalf. In doing so, I wish to highlight that since 1970, LIBOA has actively worked to promote uniform licensing regulations and bylaw enforcement throughout British Columbia and to promote licensing and bylaw enforcement practices in the public interest and to support the mandate of our member municipalities.

In promoting these goals, and being representative of those municipal professionals working in the fields of bylaw enforcement and license inspection, we are often aware of and recognize the challenges these staff experience when conducting their duties within their respective jurisdictions. This stated, within the past 10 - 15 years, it has become increasingly apparent that the mandate of many bylaw enforcement officers and licence inspectors has been evolving. This is due largely to changing legislation, evolving legal precedents and a growing need within communities for bylaw enforcement to engage in more non-traditional roles to meet the needs of these varying and evolving priorities. In many municipalities there has been a deliberate shift away from traditional Bylaw Enforcement to address these needs but often without the proper support of legislative changes.

In fulfilling the evolving mandates within communities, our LIBOA members are acutely aware of various challenges in fulfilling these duties due in part to lack of appropriate training, authority challenges, risk management concerns and at times, inadequate safety protocols.

It was these types of challenges that led to the above noted study (attached) being commissioned by the Licence Inspectors and Bylaw Officers Association of British Columbia due to the topic being raised initially by the District of West Vancouver and receiving unanimous support for an overall review province wide due to similar concerns of other members. The review undertaken by the Justice Institute of British Columbia as an independent body with expertise in the law enforcement field and which was developed by Darrell Kean & Associates Consulting Ltd. on their behalf.
Started in the Fall of 2011, Darrell Kean and Associates Consulting Ltd. conducted in depth reviews of the profession in October 2011 with 24 member representatives from LIBOA and from across the Province to ensure a broad sampling of input from small, mid and large communities and regional districts. The member participants were comprised of managers, supervisors and front line officers.

The study has received significant input as well from senior members of LIBOA to ensure that it's content recognizes that while the profession is in need of certainty in aspects of legislation, training standards, etc as well as consistency in its application throughout the Province, the mandate of an individual officer needs to remain flexible to respect the unique needs, challenges and jurisdictional authority of each municipality which often differs from one jurisdiction to the next.

Completed in early 2012, the study highlights a number of challenges and risks presented to professionals in our field as well as their respective employers. The study also provides a significant number of recommendations for ways in which bylaw enforcement and licence inspection practices can be improved to facilitate the needs of our communities.

Moving forward it is the desire of LIBOA to work with our partner municipalities, LGMA, UBCM and the Province to discuss, prioritize and action many of the recommendations provided for greater consistency of standards in bylaw enforcement and licence inspection Province wide and to benefit the employees, local governments and communities served by this municipal service. With this in mind, we recognize that this process is in its infancy and to be partly or wholly implemented will necessitate ongoing discussion between various stakeholders, not the least of which is the local governments across BC.

At this stage, the study has not been released to our general membership however we are preparing to release and facilitate a discussion with the membership on its content during our 2012 LIBOA Conference in Kelowna, BC on June 14th, 2012.

In advance of releasing the study to our members, we have met with the UBCM to seek assistance in getting the report provided to the CAO’s of local governments at the earliest opportunity. While the study has been initiated somewhat from the ground up, we recognize the support and consideration needs to be addressed at higher levels of governance and therefore we want to ensure that the lines of communication are opened and available with our LIBOA Executive Committee rather than being driven on an individual basis from our members.

We ask and appreciate it if you could review the content within the study at your convenience. LIBOA is committed to responding to enquiries or concerns and is looking to facilitate or attend conference, regional meetings or other avenues of engaging in the necessary dialogue to further the purpose and recommendations of the study.
Thank you for consideration of this information and request. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at your convenience at (250)828-3309.

Respectfully,

Jon Wilson
President