



October 25, 2018

Mr. Arjun Singh
President
Union of British Columbia Municipalities
60-10551 Shellbridge Way
Richmond BC V6X 2W9

Dear Mr. Singh:

Thank you for your September 24, 2018 letter, on behalf of the UBCM membership, expressing concerns about adequate police resourcing and requesting an increase to the authorized strength at RCMP provincial detachments.

Policing unincorporated areas and municipalities under 5,000 population poses many unique challenges, particularly when it comes to resourcing. It is important to note that provincial resourcing includes not only front-line uniformed General Duty/General Investigative police officers assigned to an individual policing jurisdiction, but also many additional regional and District level resources. These resources provide specialized policing to provincial jurisdictions, including forensic identification, traffic services, Emergency Response Teams, as well as serious and major crime investigation services; and, they provide surge capacity when needed. Municipalities benefit from the presence and accessibility of these specialized provincial/District resources.

Since the 2012 Agreement was signed, the provincial government has made significant investments in provincial RCMP policing. These investments were directed to address initiatives and priorities such as organized crime, combatting guns and gangs, and responding to the opioid crisis across BC, in areas of provincial and municipal policing responsibility. Municipalities also benefit from the increased provincial investment into combatting organized crime, gangs and guns.

I am aware that resource levels for some detachments have long been identified as an issue, either because front-line uniformed resources have not been increased or due to factors attributable to vacancy issues. Provincial detachments are resourced commensurate to the workload of the provincial area, and it is imperative that positions are filled to ensure public safety as well as for officer safety, health and wellness. In detachments integrated with RCMP Municipal Police Units in particular, this accountability needs to be clearly demonstrated to ensure one jurisdiction is not subsidizing another.

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I am committed to finding a solution to vacancy issues, and ensuring that provincial resourcing is commensurate to the workload. Ministry staff are fully engaged with the RCMP on these matters. In addition, I will raise these issues with the BC RCMP Commanding Officer, Brenda Butterworth-Carr.

With respect to increasing the authorized strength at provincial detachments, the RCMP maintains internal processes by which local detachments report pressures, such as the need for more resources, to BC RCMP Headquarters. These pressures are then prioritized and considered in the context of the larger needs of the Provincial Police Service and the RCMP's expenditure of the provincial funding delegation. At this time, the BC Provincial Service has a total authorized strength of 2,602 member positions. I can advise that the RCMP has included a number of business cases for new additional front-line detachment resources in its 2019/20 Multi-Year Financial Plan (MYFP). I am confident that these business cases will be carefully considered. The RCMP also has the ability to recommend the re-allocation of existing resources from one Provincial Unit to another to adapt to the changing needs of the Service. I can assure you that any recommendations brought forward by the RCMP to re-allocate provincial resources will be considered and assessed according to the interests of public safety.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. I appreciate and value the collective views of local governments and will continue to raise your concerns with the RCMP.

Sincerely,



Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety
and Solicitor General

pc: The Honourable Selina Robinson
Mr. Clayton Pecknold