

October 31, 2017



Senator Larry W. Campbell
Senator Mobina S.B. Jaffer
Senator Yonah Martin
Senator Richard Neufeld
Senator Nancy Greene Raine
Senator Yuen Pau Woo

The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

RE: BC Local Government Concerns with Bill C-7

Dear Senators,

On behalf of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM), I am writing today to express British Columbia (BC) local government concerns with Bill C-7, *An Act to amend the Public Service Labour Relations Act, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board Act and other Acts and to provide for certain other measures*. Although Bill C-7 has received Royal Assent, I hope you will consider the following input regarding potential financial and service level implications, as well as a request to discuss local government involvement in a new labour relations regime.

In BC, municipalities over 5,000 in population pay 70%-90% of the cost base in their respective policing agreements. As such, local governments stand to absorb a substantial portion of any increase in operational costs resulting from Bill C-7. Through the process of binding arbitration, the Province of British Columbia has already seen a significant increase in independent police and fire compensation, disproportionate to wage increases for other unionized local government staff. With the cost of protective services approaching 30% of most urban local government budgets, it is important that Bill C-7's binding arbitration process consider a local government's ability to pay when considering decisions.

Another major issue for local governments is the federal decision to remove the bargaining exclusions originally included in Bill C-7. These exclusions, if kept, would have been consistent with exclusions listed under the *Public Service Labour Relations Act*. The expanded scope for collective bargaining has the potential to impact affordability and sustainability of policing services in local governments that utilize RCMP policing services. Local governments continue to face rising costs as well as downloads from other orders of government (e.g. DNA analysis services costs); we sincerely hope the federal government can take necessary action to

ensure the long term financial sustainability of the RCMP in the face of these cost pressures.

As the new labour relations regime is implemented, the ability for local governments to deliver an appropriate level of service will be tested. This especially holds true in British Columbia, which is home to the largest contingent of RCMP members in Canada. In order to ensure that British Columbia, and Canada, benefit from the best level of police service possible, we encourage representatives of the federal government and RCMP to provide local governments the opportunity to stay informed and engaged in this new system. I would like to request a meeting, at your earliest convenience, to discuss local government involvement in a new labour relations regime. Bhar Sihota, UBCM Policy Analyst, may be reached at (604) 270-8226 Ext. 114 or bsihota@ubcm.ca to arrange a meeting.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Booth".

Wendy Booth
UBCM President