

April 10, 2017

The Honourable Ralph Goodale
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

The Honourable Scott Brison
President of the Treasury Board
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

RE: BC Local Government Concerns with Bill C-7

Dear Ministers,

I write to you today to express British Columbia 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*. I hope you will consider the following concerns regarding financial and service level implications of Bill C-7, as well as a request to discuss local government involvement in a new labour relations regime.

In British Columbia, 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. 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 include provisions that arbitrators must consider a local government's ability to pay when rendering decisions.

Another major issue for local governments is the Senate amendment 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*. Additionally, the expanded scope for collective bargaining has the potential to impact affordability and sustainability of policing services in local governments that utilize RCMP services. Local governments continue to face rising costs as well as downloads from other orders of government (e.g. DNA analysis services costs); removing the exclusions may add to the financial burden local governments are anticipating will result from the new RCMP labour relations regime.

Since Bill C-7 was first introduced in the House of Commons, BC local governments have not been given an opportunity to provide fulsome and thorough feedback. Despite local governments bearing responsibility for the majority of costs associated with policing, neither the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) nor the RCMP Local Government Contract Management Committee (LGCMC) has been directly consulted by the federal government or RCMP regarding Bill C-7 and its implications.

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 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Krause". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Murry Krause
President, Union of BC Municipalities