



**NATIONAL
POLICE
FEDERATION**

**FÉDÉRATION
DE LA POLICE
NATIONALE** TM

220 LAURIER AVENUE WEST, 8TH FLOOR
OTTAWA ON K2P 1P1
www.npf-fpn.com

July 18, 2023

The Hon. David Eby, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
Office of the Premier
Email Address: Premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier Eby,

Thank you for attending the National Police Federation's (NPF) breakfast panel on bail reform during Canada's Premiers conference in Winnipeg last week. I found it to be a good discussion on how we can modernize Canada's bail system to improve public safety for communities across B.C., and our Members who respond to calls for service.

Following the meeting, the Premiers, including you, specifically expressed concern about the lack of clarity on the federal government's commitment to contract policing. The NPF shares this concern. Through our conversations with senior representatives of Public Safety Canada, it's our understanding that the purpose of the current contract policing assessment is to engage with contract partners and stakeholders this summer to explore opportunities to optimize policing contracts in the future by establishing cost certainties, reducing cost variances, and filling vacancies. These engagement sessions would conclude with a "What we heard" report that would be released this fall.

Earlier this week, we asked the Prime Minister and Minister Mendicino to clarify the intent of this assessment to provide clarity for contract partners, Canadians, and, importantly, current and future RCMP officers.

Beyond this, you recently expressed concern regarding RCMP vacancies and recruiting in B.C. As you know, police recruitment, consistent with all labour markets, has been a challenge since the beginning of the pandemic. For the RCMP, this started with the pandemic-related closure of Depot in 2020, followed by a decline in training capacity (due to physical distancing requirements) and, ultimately, applications. Since then, the NPF and the RCMP have undertaken several initiatives to increase recruitment, resulting in a resurgence in applications and new cadets entering the training program. This has resulted in fully enrolled 24-person troops for July and an increase to 32-person troops to accommodate demand in August: for the first time since 2020.

To boost recruitment even further, in January 2023, the Treasury Board of Canada, the RCMP, and the NPF entered into an agreement that enhances the recruitment of experienced police officers (EPOs) from provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous, and military policing to join the RCMP. This program has been extremely well received, with hundreds of experienced officers now serving in the RCMP and currently progressing through the application process.

While RCMP recruitment is recovering from the pandemic, it is important to note that applications are on the rise with new cadets entering the workforce every day. When looking at B.C., the RCMP has averaged

over 220 applicants a month from B.C. over the past five months, with over 400 in June alone. To bolster more officers in the province, all B.C. applicants have been told that they can return to B.C. through pre-posting agreements. Through the experienced police officer program, between April and June 2023, there have been close to 30 hired and another 55 in the application process in B.C. alone. Nationally, that number exceeds 600. There is no shortage of interest from EPOs in joining the RCMP. Through this year's EPO program, we will see over 80 new RCMP officers in B.C., with many more from Depot on the way. The NPF has expressed numerous times over the past months that we are confident in the RCMP's ability to meet or exceed the staffing requirements of the B.C. RCMP.

While your attention to recruitment is valid and even appreciated, we implore you to obtain the updated B.C. RCMP staffing numbers and understand the recent changes the RCMP has made to recruiting so that all the facts can be reported accurately and publicly, and to inform fact-based decision-making.

Last year, the Province announced \$230 million over three years for the hiring of 277 RCMP officers to fill vacancies. The NPF welcomes this funding announcement as these positions had previously gone unfunded by the Province. For the B.C. RCMP to reach its fully authorized 2012 strength of 2,602 officers, an additional 242 positions must be re-funded.

We take this opportunity to note that, as above, B.C. has not increased its RCMP authorized police strength since 2012, despite ongoing population increases. Coupled with the Province's underfunding of RCMP positions over the past decade, this has created an environment where our Members must serve more and more people with less and less resources. This creates more soft vacancies (physical and mental health leaves and other personal/family needs) due to our Members being overworked. In the NPF's 2024 pre-budget submission we have made funding recommendations to remedy this and look forward to the Province addressing this issue.

Despite this, the B.C. crime rate has continued on a downward trend according to Statistics Canada Policing and Crime Severity Index (CSI) data. Between 2019-2021, B.C. saw an 11% reduction in CSI. Surrey, B.C., during that same time, saw a 17% reduction in CSI and a 19% reduction in violent CSI. Over the past year, Surrey saw an additional 14% decrease in violent CSI. RCMP Members are doing exceptional police work.

We ask all leaders to please remember that our RCMP Members are not political pawns and should not be used as scapegoats for over a decade of provincial underfunding of the B.C. RCMP or shifted around on a policing chessboard with no say in their positions and postings. Our Members serve their communities every day, put their lives on the line, have families and children rooted in those communities, and should be treated as people, not uniforms.

We have sent recent letters requesting a meeting with you to discuss this issue and others. We will follow up with your office in the coming weeks to schedule a meeting. In the meantime, should your office wish to connect with us, please contact Ryan Fedurco at rfedurco@npf-fpn.com.

Sincerely,



Brian Sauvé
President & CEO

cc: Deputy Commissioner Dwayne MacDonald, Commanding Officer – B.C. RCMP
The Hon. Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General



NATIONAL
POLICE
FEDERATION

FÉDÉRATION
DE LA POLICE
NATIONALE™