

Minister of Public Safety



Ministre de la Sécurité publique

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P8

AOUT  
AUG 31 2012

His Worship Mike Frasier  
Resolution Committee Chair  
North Central Local Government Association  
206-155 George Street  
Prince George, British Columbia V2L 1P8

Dear Mr. Mayor:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 26, 2012, in which you relay the North Central Local Government Association's (NCLG) resolutions pertaining to Transitional Housing in Rural and Remote Communities; Emergency Services Funding; National Sex Offender Registry; Release of Dangerous Offenders; and, the Shipping of Dangerous Goods Liabilities.

I appreciate your concerns and I would like to commend you for lending your voice to advocating for improvements to the criminal justice system. Let me assure you that our Government received a strong mandate from Canadians to continue to fight crime and make our streets and communities safe for our families and our children.

Firstly, I would like to assure you that we are committed to protecting Canadians from sex offenders and we are taking a multi-faceted approach, including crime prevention initiatives, legislative reforms, and providing support to victims of crime. The National Sex Offender Registry (Registry) is an important tool for police across Canada to use in protecting our communities against sex offenders. In terms of public notifications, the federal *Privacy Act*, as well as provincial legislation and policies, allow local police forces to issue advisories and photos of high-risk offenders living in their respective communities to enable members of the public to take precautionary measures. These notifications are given wide distribution through police websites and the media. You may wish to contact your respective provincial government to obtain more information on public notifications.

The significant reforms to the Registry, brought into force by our Government last year through the former Bill S-2 (*Protecting Victims from Sex Offenders Act*), will further strengthen the capacity of police services to access information that will assist them in their investigative and preventative work in order to protect the public from sex offenders in communities across Canada.

One of the key reforms allows the police to proactively use the Registry to prevent, as well as investigate, crimes of a sexual nature. This important amendment ensures that police may access the database in situations where an offence has not yet occurred, such as situations involving suspicious behaviour near a playground, which can assist responding officers to prevent the commission of a sexual offence.

Canada

Most recently, we passed Bill C-10 the *Safe Streets and Communities Act* which received Royal Assent on March 13, 2012 further strengthens our laws to better protect children by:

- Creating new mandatory minimum prison sentences for seven existing offences related to child exploitation and eliminating the use of conditional sentences, also known as house arrest, for any of these cases;
- Increasing mandatory minimum prison sentences for nine existing offences to better reflect the serious nature of these offences, as well as to bring greater consistency in sentencing in these cases;
- Increasing maximum prison sentences for four existing child sexual exploitation offences to better reflect the particularly heinous nature of these offences;
- Creating two new offences to prohibit anyone from providing sexually explicit material to a child for the purpose of facilitating the commission of a sexual offence against that child, and to prohibit anyone from using any means of telecommunications, including the Internet, to agree or make arrangements with another person for the purpose of committing a sexual offence against a child; and
- Requiring judges to consider prohibiting suspected or convicted child sex offenders from having any unsupervised contact with a young person under the age of 16 years or having any unsupervised use of the Internet or other digital network.

Public Safety Canada also has a lead role in coordinating and managing the National Strategy for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation on the Internet. This Strategy has increased the capacity of our law enforcement partners to investigate and track down online predators, including those who make and distribute child pornography, and has enhanced public education, awareness, and support for further research on child exploitation.

With regards to the release of offenders, under the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) is authorized to impose various conditions in rendering its decisions regarding offenders applying for various types of conditional release. This includes conditions that place restrictions on an offender's residency. For example, in considering an offender's day or full parole, the Board may impose a period of residency at a community-based facility, such as a halfway house or Community Correctional Centre, in order to effectively manage risk and intervention needs. This measure provides a more structured living environment, on-site supervision, programs and accountability, which facilitate the offender's safe reintegration to the community.

Similarly, the Board may impose a residency condition for an offender on statutory release or on a Long-Term Supervision Order where gradual reentry and increased supervision are considered necessary to manage the risk and ensure the safety of the public. Mandatory conditions of parole and statutory release also require an offender to remain at all times in Canada within the boundaries fixed by the parole officer. Further, the PBC may impose a number of conditions on paroled offenders, such as remaining in or away from a specified geographic area.

At the time an offender is released to the community, CSC is responsible for monitoring and managing an offender's progress throughout the supervision period. CSC supervises offenders' compliance with their conditions and notifies registered victims through the Victim Services Unit of the dates and times of their approved travel to a destination. In carrying out this role, any breach of conditions is assessed by CSC and can lead to the suspension or termination of the offender's release.

The Government continues to identify reforms that will address victims' needs and safety. This includes consideration of measures with regard to imposing conditions that are reasonable and necessary to manage risk posed by the offender where a registered victim or other person has expressed concerns about their personal safety.

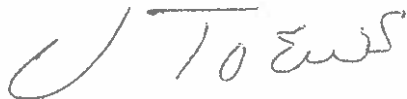
Please rest assured that the known concerns of victims are clearly annotated in all CSC and PBC decisions, which include measures to balance the rights of the victims and their families with the reintegration of the offender.

With respect to the elimination of the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP), this was part of the Economic Action Plan 2012 announced on March 29, 2012. Public Safety Canada carefully and critically examined its emergency management activities and identified deficit reduction measures that streamline government operations, while ensuring the safety and security of Canadians. While federal contributions for emergency preparedness projects under JEPP will end in 2013, funding remains in place for projects submitted for consideration in 2012-2013.

Finally, with regards to NCLG resolution on Shipping of Dangerous Goods Liabilities, this issue fall under the purview of my colleague, the Minister of Transport Canada and I have forwarded a copy of your correspondence for his consideration. As well, the resolution on Transitional Housing in Rural and Remote Communities has already been noted in your resolution as a provincial matter.

Thank you for writing on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vic Toews". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "T".

Vic Toews, P.C., Q.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Denis Lebel, Q.C., M.P.  
Minister of Transport Canada