



BRITISH COLUMBIA

VIA EMAIL

June 28, 2021

Her Worship Val van den Broek
Mayor of the City of Langley
Langley City Hall
20399 Douglas Crescent
Langley BC V3A 4B3
Email: mayor@langleycity.ca; djoyal@langleycity.ca

Dear Mayor Val van den Broek:

Thank you for your letter dated May 7, 2021, addressed to Premier John Horgan, in which you write on behalf of the Council for the City of Langley to support the advocacy of anti-human trafficking educator Cathy Peters. As Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, with responsibility for addressing human trafficking, your letter has been referred to me.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General is taking action to combat human trafficking, including supporting the availability of training and education, fostering community-led responses, promoting knowledge exchanges and collaboration at the local and national level, supporting the availability of support services to trafficked persons across the province, and enhancing investigative capacity across the province.

In addition to providing over \$42M in annual funding to support over 400 victim service and violence against women programs across the province, all of which support trafficked persons, we provide grants to community-based organizations for trafficking-related projects through the Civil Forfeiture Crime Prevention and Remediation Grant Program. In March 2021, approximately \$637,000 was provided to support projects addressing Human Trafficking, Sexual Exploitation, and Vulnerable People in the Sex Trade. Through the grant program, beginning in 2019/20, we provided three-year funding to Family Services of Greater Vancouver for a victim service worker in the Vancouver Police Department's Counter Exploitation Unit to support trafficking victims navigating the criminal justice system by providing them with emotional and practical support.

Additionally, the Province is directing \$799,200 received from Public Safety Canada towards the project "Building local internet child exploitation unit capacity in BC to combat child sexual exploitation online". This project will provide additional support to 11 independent municipal police departments – in the areas of staffing, training, and equipment – to enhance their capacity to investigate cases of child sexual exploitation online.

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Mayor Val van den Broek
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We also continue to work with federal, provincial, territorial and local partners to strengthen our response to human trafficking by leveraging resources and ensuring our efforts are coordinated across jurisdictions.

With respect to your point about training for prosecutors, Crown Counsel receive ongoing education, specialized training and key resources and supports to assist in the prosecution of cases involving human exploitation. This includes internal programming and webinars as well as courses and presentations offered by external organizations. Ongoing education spans a range of key issues, including evolving case law in this area. All BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) personnel have access to Trauma Informed Practice training and education about the impacts of trauma and the removal of barriers for victims and witnesses participating in the justice system. In addition, one of the primary supports provided to BCPS Crown Counsel in prosecuting complex cases involving sexual exploitation, human trafficking and sexual offences against children is an active team of Resource Counsel, who are subject matter experts in the field. Finally, Crown Counsel have ongoing access to online supports with specialized information, resources and case law summaries that assist them in preparing for cases involving sexual exploitation, including crimes against children.

Thank you for your commitment to this very important issue and for supporting the valuable work undertaken by Cathy Peters. I have also met with her recently, and we are aware of her efforts to raise awareness about human trafficking and appreciate the updates she has shared with us about her work in this area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Farnworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M" and "F".

Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety
and Solicitor General



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Langley City Hall, 20399 Douglas Crescent, Langley, BC Canada V3A 4B3
mayor@langleycity.ca

May 7, 2021

The Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

VIA Email: premier@gov.bc.ca

Dear Premier:

Re: Addressing Human Trafficking in BC

At its April 26, 2021 Regular Council Meeting, the Council for the City of Langley received a presentation from Ms. Cathy Peters, BC Anti-Human Trafficking Educator, Speaker, and Advocate. Council was very impressed, both with the breadth of Ms. Peters' knowledge and her ability to provide information on this complex issue in a clear and concise manner. In fact, we were shocked to learn the extent to which human trafficking is taking place in our province and across Canada and that high school, middle school, and even elementary school aged children are being aggressively targeted for sex trafficking. We recognize that this is a very serious topic which must not be ignored.

As part of her presentation, Ms. Peters introduced Council to the US State Department's annual *Trafficking in Persons Report* which summarizes the responses of different countries to human trafficking - <https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-trafficking-in-persons-report/canada/>. We learned that while the Government of Canada was assigned a Tier 1 placement, a number of gaps were identified in our country's efforts to fight human trafficking, including:

- lack of data collection;
- lack of victim services;
- poor collaboration between provincial and federal governments;
- need for pro-active law enforcement;
- growing number of Canadian child sex tourists; and
- training needed for prosecutors and judges and for restitution for victims.

Ms. Peters highlighted the fact that there is little to no public awareness of this criminal activity in BC and that our province has fewer strategies in place to address human trafficking as compared to most other provinces, making BC particularly attractive for traffickers to run their lucrative criminal operations. We believe that in order to effectively address this pressing issue in BC, there is a need for funding to be made available for provincial law enforcement, a province-wide awareness campaign, and an inter-agency Human Sex Trafficking Task Force similar to the existing drug and gang task forces. To this end, I on behalf of Council, respectfully urge the Province to prioritize human trafficking as a topic of concern and allocate resources towards addressing this unfathomable crime.

Further, I encourage you to visit Ms. Peters' website <http://www.beamazingcampaign.org/> and contact her by email ca.peters@telus.net to arrange a presentation on this urgent issue.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,
City of Langley



Val van den Broek
Mayor

CC: Executive Council of BC
Langley City Council