



Superintendent Jason Popik
Southwest Nova District Policing Officer
8833 Commercial Street
New Minas, NS
B4N 3C4

Your File

Warden Penny Smith, Municipality Shelburne

Our File

November 7, 2025

Dear Warden Smith:

Re: Request for an Organized Crime Unit in South West Nova Scotia Letter dated October 21, 2024

I recognize the delayed response regarding this letter to the Minister of Justice dated October 21, 2024. I also acknowledge I was not the primary recipient however as a key representative to and for you, I consider it important that I provide input and feedback now that I can.

I took command of Southwest Nova District RCMP on September 23, 2025. At that time I recognized a similar issue as it pertained to a lack of organized crime investigative resources both in terms of leadership and form. I quickly established an ad hoc organized crime response to address the long standing and ongoing issues of organized crime in Clare County, specific to issues related to drug dealing, intimidation, extortion, shootings and arsons. I also was aware that this organized crime group was influence and inflaming tensions and activities within the Fishery Industry.

I trust you can understand the need for discretion and confidence when police embark on an active organized crime investigative project. It is for this need of operational security, I was not in a position to share the efforts I was taking to address the very real concerns that you had brought forward. I want to reassure you that both S/Sgt Mark MacPherson, NCO i/c Shelburne District, and Sgt Jeff LeBlanc, NCO i/c Meteghan Detachment, were aware, supporting and cooperating participants in this project.

As it pertains to the immediate concern that you raised, early in October 2024 I coordinated a multi-agency response that encompassed collaboration amongst local law enforcement bodies including: the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, provincial Department of Natural Resources and the RCMP. This enabled us to pool our collective resources while applying our distinct subject matter expertise as we shared intelligence, developed new intelligence, then identified and captured evidence in an effort to address a collective issue within the Clare based organized crime group.

Non-sensitive

Our joint forces operation was formalized in a memorandum of understanding and operated from October 28, 2024 until February 2025. This project had good success in bringing together multiple agencies with differing perspectives, techniques and authorities to address illegal fishery as well as criminal code and CDSA matters. Overall we were able to address 8 organized crime files, one of which involved a significant organized crime group in County Clare. As it pertains to this group, we arrested the leaders on 4 occasions which significantly reduced their ability to extort, threaten and terrorize this community. Throughout the course of this project we collectively drafted 27 judicial search warrants; conducted over 1050 hours of surveillance with another 2000 investigative resource hours; searched 10 locations; seized 5 firearms; seized CDSA: 41.3 g of crystal methamphetamine, 376.4 g of cocaine, psilocybin (magic mushrooms), 15 g of Tusi (designer drug), \$6156 Canadian currency and 14,540 illegal cigarettes. An additional benefit of this type of joint operation is the trust and cross agency skill, knowledge and development that our collective members come away with.

These efforts have enabled the Southwest Nova RCMP to address a long standing and prolific organized crime group in County Clare, however I recognize your concerns exceed that immediate community. I have also redirected the Additional Officer Program members while also developing more GIS Plain Clothes resources to support our detachments. Previous to this new direction, the SCEU (street level organized crime investigators) worked in small siloed teams, within the immediate detachments where they are posted. There are numerous reasons why this type of localized direction limits efficiency and success, as it pertains to organized crime investigations. The units are now directed through my level of authority to the betterment of addressing organized crime globally across Southwest Nova. However it still remains necessary to provide detachment commanders with plain clothes investigators (GIS) that they can direct to serious persons crimes or prolific offenders in their immediate areas. Through this realignment and direction of the 21 SCEU Resources while broadening the number of GIS resources (12) I have been able to offer 3 investigative tactical business line to our commanders. I do note that 2 of 10 detachments do not have GIS resources (Queens and Shelburne/Barrington) and this remains a challenging gap in Southwest Nova.

I offer this information to provide a clear direction on my efforts to improve efficiency in addressing organized crime, illicit drug crime as well as knock on effects resulting from tensions in the fisheries. I recognize your letter was seeking additional law enforcement resources within Shelburne County however I am limited to gaining efficiencies with those that I currently have. I will note however that the Commanding Officer of Nova Scotia, has developed a priority, in consultation with the Department of Justice, to establish a midlevel organized crime investigative team. This will further enhance our ability to address organized crime across Nova Scotia as the Provincial Police Agency will have both street level and mid-level organized crime groups who can work cooperatively to address these groups wherever they are operating.

I remain available to discuss these matters further, if you so chose.

Regards,



Supt. Jason Popik
Southwest Nova District Policing Officer

CC: Warden Yvon LeBlanc - Municipality of Clare
MLA Becky Druhan