

September 3, 2025

The Honourable Sean Fraser
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
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Ottawa, ON K1A 0H8
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The Honourable Becky Druhan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Nova Scotia
Department of Justice
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Subject: Urgent Concerns Regarding Drug Activity, Community Safety, and the Justice System

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the Council of the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, we are compelled to write with deep concern about the state of public safety in our community. While we remain grateful for the actions of the RCMP officers serving our area, their efforts are consistently undermined by a justice system that is not functioning as it should.

Residents across our municipality are living with growing fear and frustration as drug activity and its associated crimes—break and enters, vehicle thefts, and other serious offences—continue to occur. The reality is that individuals involved in these crimes are often apprehended, only to be released quickly back into the community, perpetuating a cycle of lawlessness. This “catch and release” approach erodes public trust, drains police resources, and leaves our residents feeling unsafe in their homes and neighbourhoods.

We must be clear: the current system is failing our community. It is not enough to address a single part of the problem. While increasing funding for RCMP resources can help address immediate concerns, true community safety requires us to go deeper. We need to focus on the root causes that drive criminal activity—issues like mental health and addictions and systemic gaps in our justice system. By strengthening prevention and support services, we can reduce crime more effectively than enforcement alone. We feel there needs to be solutions that not only respond to crime, but also prevent it from taking

root in the first place. Without a comprehensive plan to tackle these issues together, the cycle will not be broken.

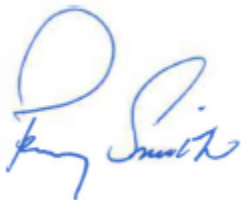
Our Council is calling for:

- **Stronger accountability within the justice system** so that meaningful consequences deter repeat offences.
- **Increased investment in addiction and mental health services** that address the root causes of crime and offer real pathways to recovery.
- **A coordinated and transparent plan** from all levels of government that ensures law enforcement, health services, and community representatives are working together toward sustainable solutions.

We urge your offices to act with urgency. The cost of inaction is not just measured in crime statistics—it is measured in the safety, well-being, and confidence of our residents, which are being steadily eroded. Communities cannot continue to shoulder the burden of a system that is broken at multiple levels.

We do not profess to be experts in the justice system; however, we stand ready to work with you and other partners to ensure a justice system that truly protects our citizens and supports healthier, safer communities.

Yours sincerely,



Warden Penny Smith

Cc:

The Honourable Tim Houston, Premier of Nova Scotia (premier@novascotia.ca)

Jessica Fancy, MP, South Shore – St. Margarets (jessica.fancy@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Nolan Young, MLA, Shelburne (nolan.young@novascotia.ca)

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