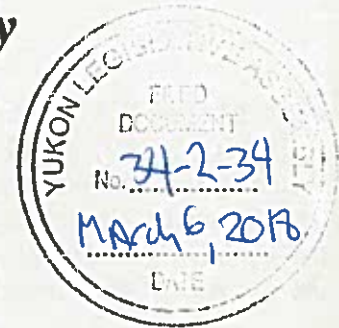




## Yukon Legislative Assembly

Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6



July 14, 2017

Hon. Tracy-Anne McPhee  
Minister of Justice  
Box 2703  
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

Dear Minister McPhee,

**RE: Resources for RCMP, Victim Services, and the Coroner's Office**

The Yukon RCMP issued a news release this week regarding the ninth homicide in this territory within the past 11 months. This number of homicides in less than a year is both tragic and unusual. It also increases pressure on RCMP resources, as well as on staff of your department.

Following close consultation with Yukon's RCMP Division, in April 2016 the commanding officer and I announced funding for five new RCMP positions. At that time, we also planned to add four additional RCMP positions this fiscal year.

However, it is very important to note that the agreement between the Department of Justice and the Yukon RCMP about their resource needs was concluded prior to the recent spike in the number of homicides. After the eighth homicide, the Yukon RCMP publicly expressed concern about the pressure on local resources, noting that this situation is not sustainable.

I urge you and your department to work with the Yukon RCMP to assess their current needs, and determine what additional resources they require to handle this increased number of investigations into major crimes. I also urge you to reassess the needs within the Department of Justice, especially in Victim Services and the Coroner's Office.

Since both of these units are already dealing with increased pressures caused by other sources, including the high number of deaths linked to fentanyl usage, it is very likely that neither have the capacity to handle the current volume of homicides.

I will also take this opportunity to reiterate the suggestions I made to you and your Cabinet colleagues in the Legislative Assembly on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> about the need to review the support structure that is in place for health professionals, first responders, and people in other front line services, including ensuring there is effective critical incident stress management for everyone in these jobs or volunteer positions. As I noted on May 9<sup>th</sup>, the government should also assess whether the Coroner's Office needs a second full-time coroner position now.

Sincerely,



Brad Cathers  
MLA for Lake Laberge  
Official Opposition Critic for Justice

Cc. Hon. John Streicker, Minister of Community Services  
Chief Superintendent Scott Sheppard, Yukon RCMP