

MEDIA RELEASE

City of Williams Lake



450 Mart Street
Williams Lake, BC
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For Immediate Release

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Council calls for stronger sentencing and monitoring of prolific and repeat offenders

City of Williams Lake Council is calling for stronger sentencing and monitoring for prolific and repeat offenders, and is seeking the public's input on custody and electronic monitoring, as well as Council's pursuit of an inquiry into the judicial and sentencing system.

The link to the survey can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/prolificoffenderssurvey>

Despite repeated correspondence from the City of Williams Lake calling for stronger sentencing for prolific and repeat offenders, the judiciary has consistently failed to consider the threat to community safety resulting from their release into the community. Although the availability and proven effectiveness of the Electronic Monitoring Program is well known, prolific offenders are not consistently required to wear an ankle bracelet while on outstanding charges.

The interests of the public have received very little, if any, consideration during the sentencing process. Applying electronic monitoring devices still provides offenders with reasonably limited freedom; this technology does not compromise the safety of the public to the degree that releasing offenders, particularly repeat offenders, into the community without reasonable monitoring does. This is an efficient technological solution that is already available.

The judicial system is overburdened, due in large part to repeat offenders. Council has continued to request that the courts and judges take into consideration the community appetite to see stricter penalties applied to these types of criminals, and that they not be released. At Council's request, the possibility of a public inquiry to determine why so many prolific offenders with serious charges are released into our community with ineffective deterrents to re-offend, is now being pursued by our MLA and our MP.

"We are seriously concerned about the ongoing threats to our community from the release of serious criminals while they await sentencing," said Mayor Walt Cobb. "Council is thankful for the efforts of MLA Lorne Doerkson and MP Todd Doherty in helping address the systemic shortcomings we are experiencing, and we hope that a review of the judicial process will help strengthen the ability of judges to impose sentences that keep these criminals off the streets."

"We are looking for creative, positive reform to stop the repeat offenders from victimizing communities," said Councillor Scott Nelson. "Enough is enough. It's time to address this serious issue."

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