



ALBERTA  
JUSTICE AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

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*Office of the Minister  
MLA, Calgary-Acadia*

June 06, 2022

The Honourable Marco Mendicino  
Minister of Public Safety  
269 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa ON K1A 0P8

Dear Minister Mendicino:

In my capacity as Minister of Alberta Justice and Solicitor General, one of my responsibilities is to provide for adequate and effective policing in Alberta, including advocating for municipalities responsible for providing policing pursuant to Alberta's *Police Act*.

The Town of Coaldale, with a current population of 8,691, is the only municipality in Alberta contracting Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Municipal Police Services, and paying 100 per cent for its policing. This circumstance owing to the federal Treasury Board policy, the New Entrants Guidelines (NEG), arbitrarily introduced shortly after the 1992 Provincial Police Service Agreement (PPSA) negotiations, as a means to discourage new RCMP municipal contracts. In particular, I understand the concern was to limit larger municipalities that hold economic viability to pay for independent police services from converting to RCMP municipal contracts, merely for the 10 per cent or 30 per cent cost savings. It was not necessarily intended for emerging municipalities at the lower population threshold range between 5001 and 14,999. Providing a 70/30 cost share arrangement to these new entrants would necessitate minimal cost impact to the federal government and have immense benefit to these municipalities.

Unfortunately, as this was implemented regardless of population size, economic viability of the municipality, and ability to pay for the 100 per cent costs imposed by the NEG, municipalities, such as the Town of Coaldale, are now potentially impacted by the NEG in a manner that is detrimental and harmful to their ability to provide effective policing in their community. In fact, I understand that the Town of Coaldale is the only municipality in Alberta to move into the Municipal Policing Service Agreement (MPSA) since the 2012 PPSA renegotiations, at 100 per cent cost.

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Further to this, Coaldale's historical records show the municipality was previously policed by the RCMP before beginning a form of protection services/policing in the 1930s. It then formed its own independent police service, the Coaldale Police. In 2003, Coaldale considered an RCMP MPSA, but with the NEG application, it opted to become part of a regional police service; the Lethbridge Regional Police Service. At that time, it was thought this might be the best model to address the public safety needs of the community within the constructs of options, as opposed to paying 100 per cent costs with the RCMP MPSA. A transition to an RCMP MPSA in 2016 occurred, and the NEG was applied, though neither Coaldale nor the province were in favour of this cost application given the population and financial challenges for a small community.

The NEG policy, in instances such as this, appears to be an impediment to the development of innovative policing models, including regionalization and integration, and does not adequately account for the challenges of these smaller communities. Furthermore, by imposing the NEG policy on a community like Coaldale, Canada continues to retain all the benefits it receives from contract policing without paying for those benefits (i.e., the members are still deployable in an emergency or at major federal events, etc.).

One can arguably affirm the Town of Coaldale was previously policed by the RCMP prior to trying other forms of policing, that is, its own town police service and the Lethbridge Regional Police model, prior to returning to RCMP policing in 2016. I would submit, on this basis, the NEG ought not to be applied, and serves to deny the Town of Coaldale from the requisite 70/30 cost-share arrangement provided to all other RCMP policed municipalities in Alberta with a population between 5,001 and 14,999.

I understand there are two examples of communities impacted by the NEG which subsequently benefitted by cost-share arrangements under the MPSA with agreement from Canada, as result of the 2012 PPSA renegotiation. Prior to 2012, during the term of the 1992 PPSA, two new entrants' contracts were in place in New Brunswick: Sackville, with a population of 5,400, and Codiac Regional, comprised of Moncton, Dieppe, and Riverview, with a combined population of 100,500. Because of the NEG policy, when the regional force was formed, Riverview went from a 70/30 cost share to paying 100 per cent of costs, since Dieppe and Moncton were new entrants.

During the 2012 re-negotiations, Canada deemed the New Brunswick municipalities would now be considered "previously policed by the RCMP" (under the 1992 PPSA), and therefore, now qualified under the 2012 Agreement for the requisite MPSA cost share.

The Town of Coaldale has sought ministerial intervention over this cost share inequity; based on being previously policed by the RCMP, as well as the precedent now set with the New Brunswick communities.

This matter has been the subject of numerous letters between the municipality and the federal government, as well as discussion at the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) level Contract Management Committee (CMC) meetings, to which federal Treasury Board has held firm on the circa 1992 NEG policy.

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Provinces and territories have proposed Public Safety Canada remove the population threshold for municipalities between the populations of 5,001 to 14,999 from the NEG. This is entirely appropriate for smaller emerging municipalities across Canada, to provide a fair opportunity to receive RCMP municipal policing at similar cost and benefit as all other such municipalities receiving this service. It would also allow communities with independent police services to transition and receive the benefit of the national policing model provided by the RCMP, where appropriate for communities such as Coaldale.

For these reasons, I am seeking your intervention to assist the Town of Coaldale in receiving the equitable 70/30 cost share arrangement as all other MPSA communities in Alberta. Further, I urge you to engage with the federal Treasury Board to amend the NEG in favor of all municipalities with population between 5,001 and 14,999 receiving equitable RCMP MPSA costing.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by:*

Honourable Tyler Shandro, QC  
Minister

cc: His Worship Jack Van Rijn, Mayor, Town of Coaldale