

STATEMENT

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Mayor Krog applauds federal and provincial moves to improve public safety.

Having laid the responsibility for the current public safety crisis facing many BC and Canadian communities at the feet of senior government, the Mayor of Nanaimo is feeling optimistic that positive change is beginning to happen.

Proposed changes to Bill C - 48 introduced in the House of Commons May 16, are a step in the right direction, Mayor Leonard Krog said, and a clear sign that the federal Minister of Justice has listened to Canada's premiers.

"I am very pleased that the federal government has tabled legislation to put the responsibility on violent repeat offenders to prove why they should get bail instead of making prosecutors argue why they shouldn't," said Mayor Leonard Krog.

Mayors from across Canada, including the BC Urban Mayors Caucus, put their concerns about deteriorating public safety to provincial premiers, who in turn pressured David Lamettie, justice minister and attorney general, to change the current rules around bail.

"The Premier has listened to the BC mayors, and the justice minister has heard the premiers. Recent comments by Premier Eby respecting the authority of municipalities to address drug use in public spaces give us hope that we may be able to better protect our community from the effects of harmful drugs and disruptive behaviours," Krog said.

Nanaimo Council voted Monday to direct city staff to prepare a report on options to regulate drug use in public spaces.

"Ottawa's willingness to adjust bail provisions gives me hope. The Province's willingness to sit down with Nanaimo Council shows that they understand that we are overwhelmed and need help," Krog said.

The City of Nanaimo Council recently met with Premier David Eby, Attorney-General Niki Sharma and Public Safety Minister and Solicitor General Mike Farnworth about homelessness, health care and public safety. The City continues to press the provincial government for additional housing, mental health services, and policing resources.

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