



## B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

A component of NUPGE (CLC)

March 14, 2016

Chief Judge T.J Crabtree  
337-800 Hornby Street  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2C5

Dear Chief Justice T.J Crabtree

**Re Shortage of Sheriffs in Provincial courthouses**

As you are aware, the BC Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) represents Sheriff services across the province of B.C.

I am writing regarding the current shortage of Sheriffs in provincial courts. I wish to assure all provincial court judges that our union is fully aware of the ongoing disruptions in the courts and the impact this has on both the legal system and the public interest.

We also understand and appreciate that British Columbians appearing before the courts have the legal right to have their matter heard in a timely manner. Presently, the provincial government is relying on forced overtime in order to compensate for the shortage of Sheriffs. This is an inadequate solution that negatively impacts the orderly and efficient operation of our courts. It is also a violation of the Sheriffs' collective agreement. In our view, the only viable solution is to hire and train more Sheriffs and properly staff the courts to ensure that the public is served in a manner consistent with their rights.

B.C. Sheriffs are a respected part of the law enforcement community and they provide a valuable public service. They are presently overworked and underpaid in comparison to other law enforcement agencies in BC and their counterparts in other Canadian jurisdictions causing recruitment and retention problems in British Columbia.

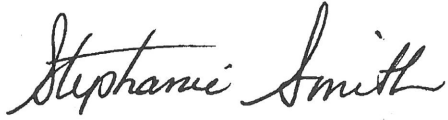
The BCGEU is using all processes available to us to try and address and resolve this situation. Sheriffs have been reminded by the union of their rights, under the collective agreement, to refuse overtime except in emergency situations. We fully appreciate that this may cause further disruptions in the courts and your ability to serve the public. We have taken steps to address this issue by communicating our concerns to the province and it is our hope that this matter will be addressed with urgency.

Understanding your role as a judge in the province of B.C. is to be one of impartiality, we would like to respectfully request that, in your ability and capacity, you call upon the province of B.C. to fulfill its

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obligation to serve the public by hiring and training the required number of Sheriffs necessary to ensure the efficient administration of the courts in B.C.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'M'.

Stephanie Smith  
BCGEU President

SS/scm  
MoveUP