



June 10th, 2026

The Honourable Nina Krieger
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Province of British Columbia
PO Box 9010 Stn Prov Govt

Sent via email:

Dear Minister Krieger:

Re: Escalating Crime and Arson in Downtown Prince George - An Urgent Call for Action on Behalf of Our Business Community

We write to you to convey the deep and growing concerns of the business community we serve. These concerns are being voiced to us with mounting urgency by the small and medium-sized enterprises that form the backbone of our regional and provincial economy.

Recently the downtown Prince George business district has been struck by a series of fires that the RCMP have confirmed as arson. Businesses including Zoe's Java House, Walk-Rite Shoes, Hometown Prints and Tops & Bottoms have been forced to close their doors due to smoke and water damage. Investigators have linked further deliberate fires on Third Avenue and Norwood Street to the same disturbing pattern. Frequent vandalism has forced other businesses to close their doors. Multiple individuals have been arrested and charged, however, perpetrators are usually released back into the community within hours of arrest. This cycle has shaken public confidence in the justice system and left law-abiding citizens questioning whether their safety is a priority at all.

The consequences are tangible and severe. Structure fires and property crime have become so prevalent that several insurers are now declining to offer coverage in our downtown core, leaving business owners exposed and, in some cases, unable to operate. The local downtown business association has gone so far as to call for the declaration of a State of Local Emergency. The business community held a townhall last Fall with over 1000 community members who attended and expressed their deep concerns. When the people who create jobs and sustain our community are reduced to pleading for emergency measures simply to keep their premises standing, something has gone profoundly wrong.

These pressures do not exist in isolation. Our businesses are being squeezed from every direction. The 2026 provincial budget announced an expansion of the Provincial Sales Tax that, effective October 1, 2026, will newly apply to a range of professional and commercial services including security services. Our business owners are now being asked to pay more tax on the very security measures they have been forced to adopt to protect themselves from the crime that government has failed to curb. The same budget extends PST to non-residential real estate services, rental and strata management, and other essential services, compounding the cost of doing business at the worst possible moment. Layered atop the rising costs of vandalism, private security, repairs and lost revenue, these measures are pushing many enterprises to their breaking point.

Business owners and constituents are tired of empty promises and the deflection of responsibility between ministries and other levels of government. They do not care which ministry holds the file; they care that they feel unseen, unheard, and unprotected. They are asking for real, time-lined solutions and a demonstrated commitment that their safety and survival matter.

As their elected representatives, we share these concerns without reservation, and we are extremely worried about the long-term effect of continued inaction on Prince George and the wider northern region. The loss of even a portion of our downtown business base would inflict lasting damage on our local economy, our tax base, and the social fabric of our city. This is damage that would take years, if not decades, to repair.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that you work with the Attorney General's Ministry and other relevant ministries and take the following steps as a matter of urgency:

1. Review the bail, release and charge-assessment practices applied to repeat and high-risk offenders in Prince George, and report publicly on what is driving the pattern of arrest-and-immediate-release;
2. Work with federal counterparts where jurisdiction overlaps and advocates directly for the changes necessary to keep individuals who pose a demonstrated danger to the community in custody pending trial;
3. Commit dedicated provincial resources to support the Prince George RCMP in providing enhanced enforcement and the 24/7 patrols being contemplated for the downtown core; and
4. Schedule a meeting with us and representatives of the business community in Prince George at the earliest opportunity to discuss a clear plan of action with measurable objectives.

The taxpayers and job-creators of Prince George deserve more than reassurance, they deserve results. We stand ready to work with you constructively and without delay to deliver them. We would be grateful for your written response and the courtesy of a meeting in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Respectfully,



Rosalyn Bird, MLA

Prince George-Valemount



Kiel Giddens, MLA

Prince George-Mackenzie



Sheldon Clare, MLA

Prince George-North Cariboo

cc: The Honourable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia
The Honourable Niki Sharma, Attorney General
The Honourable Brenda Bailey
The Honourable Ravi Kahlon
Mayor and Council, City of Prince George
Downtown Prince George Business