

**CONGRESS OF
ABORIGINAL PEOPLES**



**CONGRÈS DES
PEUPLES AUTOCHTONES**

Mayor Charlie Clark
City of Saskatoon
222 3rd Ave N
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

March 1, 2021

Dear Mayor Clark/Charlie & City Council,

I am reaching out to you with regards to Bill C-22, measures to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences for a range of offenses, including simple possession of 14 of the 67 controlled substances¹. As the representative organization for off-reserve Status and Non-Status Indians, Metis, and Southern Inuit Indigenous peoples, the Congress of Aboriginal peoples represents many communities that are disproportionately harmed by both drug epidemics, as well as discriminatory and incarceration-focused responses. CAP supports the statement in your mandate that you “can’t arrest your way out of crime”.

We feel that this legislation is a step in the right direction, but the development process raises concerns about whether it will be genuinely impactful for the constituents we represent. In particular, the bill doesn’t propose asking police to refrain from arresting people for simple possession, it only requires law enforcement to consider it. The benefits depend on whether the federal government will coordinate with provinces, municipalities, and Indigenous communities to make sure that enforcement measures reflect a genuine movement towards community care, treatment-based responses to use of controlled substances, and alternatives to incarceration.

I am asking you to support this legislation with these strengthened amendments, and to call on Federal Justice Minister David Lametti and Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, to make sure that Indigenous communities living in rural and urban areas are included in this conversation, and that our concerns are taken into account. Further, we would ask you to reach out to CAP’s Provincial Territorial Organization in your region, Association of Metis Non & Status Indians Saskatchewan, and coordinate on how these measures will be implemented in your province or territory.

Further, I ask that you consider the draft motion below for adoption at the next city council meeting. I am at your disposal if you have any follow up questions or issues that you wish to raise. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me directly at 306-717-1429.

Meegwetch,

Kim Beaudin
National Vice Chief

CC: Federation of Canadian Municipalities - CEO Carole Saab.

DRAFT MOTION

Motion: To support the abolition of mandatory minimum sentences under C-22, and support treatment, community care, and culturally relevant supports in partnership with local Indigenous communities.

Mover:

Seconder:

Whereas, the city of Saskatoon recognizes that there is systemic racism in Canada's criminal justice system with disproportionate impact on Indigenous peoples, Black Canadians and people of colour,

Whereas, the city of Saskatoon is committed to working in partnership with Indigenous communities to fight discrimination and support the goals of reconciliation and respect for Indigenous rights,

Whereas, Indigenous peoples have a long history of their own justice systems, mental and physical healing journeys, and community-based justice that deserve respect and consideration in the practice of law enforcement,

Therefore,

Be it resolved that Saskatoon direct all policing services under its jurisdiction to engage in partnership with all local Indigenous communities, all Indigenous nations on whose traditional lands we live, and all Indigenous people currently residing here in both rural and urban areas,

Be it further resolved to respect the chosen representatives of Indigenous communities, and to refuse to discriminate between representative organizations, whether they are established by the "Indian Act", through modern land claims settlement, or formed by Indigenous people themselves,

Be it further resolved that all policing services be directed to prioritize, in partnership with local Indigenous communities, every available alternative to arrest and incarceration for any individuals in contact with the law, in particular taking into account options for culturally appropriate treatment and healing.