

March 24, 2019

Sheila Wildeman  
Co-Vice Chair, East Coast Prison Justice Society  
[REDACTED]

Ms. Wildeman,

I am writing to you in your capacity, and as a representative for East Coast Prison Justice Society, Elizabeth Fry Societies - NS Mainland and Cape Breton, NS Prisoners' Health Coalition, Women's Wellness Within and the Nova Scotia Criminal Lawyers' Association. I apologize for the delay in responding to your email of March 17, 2020.

When I received your email, I immediately forwarded it to the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police leadership. I can assure that as part of Pandemic Planning activities for COVID-19 both organizations have been working with the Department of Justice to address the impacts of COVID-19 on incarceration, and other areas within the system.

This work is ongoing, and I am confident that the RCMP and Halifax Regional Police are participating fully in the discussions and adjusting operational processes where appropriate.

Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Sincerely,

Natalie Borden  
[REDACTED]

Chair  
Board of Police Commissioners  
Halifax Regional Municipality

April 7, 2020

Sheila Wildeman  
Co-Vice Chair, East Coast Prison Justice Society

[REDACTED]

Ms. Wildeman,

With respect to your request for the Board to issue a statement on the duty of police to take account of the special risks to individual and public health from COVID-19, this message has been communicated to the RCMP and HRP. They have been working with their partners in the justice system to consider public health impacts, and continue to do so on a regular basis. The Board is satisfied that these preventive measures are in place. These issues have implications beyond HRM, HRP and RCMP, so the discussions with partners in the justice system, such as DOJ and Public Health, are the best avenue to determine what is appropriate from an operational perspective, balancing the COVID-19 impacts and public safety.

With respect to complaints, the process for police complaints in the province is under the direction of the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner or the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP, not the Board of Police Commissioners.

Police powers have not changed during the pandemic, except for the additional powers required under the Health Protection Act Order by the Medical Officer of Health and the Direction of the Minister of Justice. The ban on street checks remains, and no other new policies or directives have been implemented at this time.

I have shared your concerns with the RCMP and HRP for awareness. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Natalie Borden

[REDACTED]

Chair  
Board of Police Commissioners  
Halifax Regional Municipality