



**By email**

October 28, 2022

Mass Casualty Commission  
1791 Barrington Street, Suite 310  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3K9

Dear Commissioners:

**Re: Reply submissions of the ECPJS/BCCLA coalition**

In response to the Phase 3 submissions of participants, the East Coast Prison Justice Society and British Columbia Civil Liberties Association make the following reply submissions on three issues: (1) police resourcing; (2) implementing recommendations; and (3) training assessments.

**1. Resourcing recommendations must be linked to specific failures associated with the mass casualty**

Several participants engaged in a debate about whether the RCMP have adequate resources to provide policing services in rural Nova Scotia.<sup>1</sup> These parties have a political and pecuniary interest in “winning” this debate, which diminishes their impartiality on this issue. The debate also asks the wrong question and takes the Commission beyond its mandate.

The Commission is mandated to explore the causes, context, and circumstances giving rise to the mass casualty, and to examine policing issues in relation to this tragedy. Given this mandate, it is crucial that the Commission’s discussion of police resourcing be linked to specific police failures associated with the mass casualty. While the record reveals multiple, catastrophic police failures in relation to the mass casualty, it does not establish that those failures were linked to a lack of resources.

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<sup>1</sup> See Attorney General of Nova Scotia, p. 17 (arguing that the RCMP H-Division have adequate resources); See Attorney General of Canada; See Attorney General of Canada, para. 105 and National Police Federation, pp. 4-5 (arguing that the RCMP H-Division have inadequate resources)

The RCMP's multiple, often lengthy, visits with the perpetrator are indicative of an abundance of time and resources. No member of the RCMP testified that their failure to properly investigate multiple complaints about the perpetrator was the result of a lack of resources.

On April 18-19, 2022, the RCMP did not use resources that were available to them, including a second immediate action rapid deployment team, radios with GPS features, high quality mapping tools, and Alert Ready. The RCMP also did not find it necessary to seek assistance from neighbouring police services, either for general duty or emergency response.

The RCMP had a plethora of resources it could have used to respond to the perpetrator in the years before the mass casualty and on April 18, 2020. It did not use those resources.

The RCMP does not need further resources, it needs to fix the competence, professionalism, and oversight issues that led to its failures in relation to the mass casualty.

## **2. Implementation of recommendations should include civil society organizations and communities who are disproportionately affected by policing**

Several participants urged the Commission to make procedural recommendations on how its other recommendations should be implemented.<sup>2</sup> ECPJS and BCCLA agree that implementation recommendations are important and worth considering, subject to three concerns.

First, constitutional responsibility for policing rests with the Province of Nova Scotia. Any discussion of implementation processes must recognize this constitutional responsibility.

Second, democratic policing and accountability principles require that civil society organizations and communities who are disproportionately affected by policing be invited to participate in all conversations about public safety and policing reform.

Third, any implementation recommendations must acknowledge that the RCMP specifically, and police more generally, are a barrier to police reform. The conduct of the RCMP in this inquiry does not reveal an institution that is willing to acknowledge failure, let alone take steps to address change. The relationship between the RCMP and other police services in Nova Scotia is highly dysfunctional. This raises serious concerns of any implementation strategy that is centred on police leadership.

## **3. Training assessments must be outcome-focused and evidence-based**

The National Police Federation, in the context of health training programs for its members, submits that “[m]ental health training should not be merely a box to check” and must include “evidence-based training which can be shown to be demonstrably impactful on [member] mental

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<sup>2</sup> Attorney General of Canada, paras. 100-101; Scott McLeod, p. 5; Canadian Coalition for Gun Control, p. 31; and National Police Federation, p. 43

wellness.”<sup>3</sup> This acknowledges that training assessments must be outcome-focused and evidence-based.

ECPJS and BCCLA encourage the Commission to adopt the National Police Federation’s submission for all police training. It is not enough to document what issues are discussed in police training or what outcomes are desired. The focus must be on whether the training achieves its desired outcome. This is not currently part of police governance and oversight.

All of which is respectfully submitted,



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<sup>3</sup> National Police Federation, p. 19