



NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday, March 12, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CIVIL LIBERTIES GROUP URGES MAYOR TO RETRACT THREAT OF SUIT

The BC Civil Liberties Association today sent a letter to Mayor of Langford Stewart Young expressing its concern over a public threat to recover policing costs from individuals protesting construction of the Bear Mountain interchange. On February 13, 2008, 50 to 60 RCMP officers arrested three individuals involved in a tree-sit protest and blocked public access to the area, an operation estimated to cost \$100,000.

The BCCLA is concerned that such a suit is akin to charging a fee for police services, a precedent that is cause for serious concern. The police field many requests for assistance. Transferring the costs of policing to the public could significantly reduce the availability of police services and deter contact.

Despite public criticism over the past few weeks, Mayor Young has not altered his position. The BC Civil Liberties Association has urged Mayor Stewart Young to publicly retract his threat. "Police should work for the public in the public interest on the public dime. Threatening civil suits to recover policing costs misconceives the purposes and benefits of police action." said BCCLA President Jason Gratl. "The public ought to be reassured that the police will continue to offer all of their services free of charge."

A full copy of the letter can be found at www.bccla.org.

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