Date

MLA/Mayor/MP name  
Address  
  
Re: Community safety concerns

Dear MLA or Mayor, or MP *(insert appropriate contact name)*:

I am writing to you today to speak about a very important topic, the health and wellness of our *(commercial business district, downtown, main street)*. I own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ business, which employs \_\_\_\_\_\_ number of people and has operated in the community for \_\_\_\_\_\_ years. We have seen a significant increase in street disorder, crime, vandalism, theft, violence, and an overall lack of safety over the past several years, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic and is hindering our ability to recover from this crisis. We need urgent action and are specifically requesting the following:

* Action to ensure we are providing complex care to the most marginalized in our community.
* A process to ensure the most marginalized of our population who may need some form of involuntary care can start their journey to recovery.
* Alignment to ensure that programs which support the most marginalized in our communities are operated in a fashion that does not disrupt the neighbourhood where they operate.
* Improved enforcement with a focus on stopping the revolving door of the relatively small, but hugely impactful group of repeat offenders that are in and out of incarceration, and instead providing effective treatment options or alternative justice streams.
* Implementation of an effective safe drug supply program as one of the measures to address the toxic drugs circulating in our communities and the related rampant property crime, theft, and shoplifting.
* Development of a provincial program to support businesses dealing with the financial impacts due to property crime.
* The province to identify and support innovative, research-based approaches to address mental health and addictions issues, such as SFU’s CARMHA Program that can also provide measurable outcomes and success indicators.

The increased street disorder, property crime, theft, violence, as well as mental health and addiction related issues in our community have resulted in both direct and indirect impacts to my business. Not only are we facing increased costs and higher insurance premiums (some communities are not even able to obtain insurance) due to rampant property crime (graffiti, broken windows, vandalism) and increased investments in enhanced security measures, but we are also losing products and revenue from theft at an alarming rate. Most significantly, however, we are at risk of losing / have lost employees and customers who are no longer feeling safe in the community or my place of business*. (include what examples apply above, as well as any other financial/emotional impacts that apply)*

Our business is on the frontlines of this crisis. Myself and my employees are constantly put in *(uncomfortable/unpredictable/unsafe situations)* involving *(include all that apply)* encampments, unresponsive individuals, drug paraphernalia, garbage, as well as urination and defecation in doorways/alleyways/loading bays and are experiencing first-hand incidents of *(include all that apply)* theft, shoplifting, open drug use or dealing, overdoses, as well as violent and aggressive behaviours and encounters. Aside from the serious financial impacts, the effects on our well-being are immeasurable. Increased fear, anxiety and stress are common in the workplace.

Small business people, like myself, and my employees are not trained to deal with serious social, mental health and addiction-related issues, nor do we have the appropriate supports and interventions currently in place to effectively help those individuals most in need.

The health and well-being of our *(downtown, commercial business district, main street)* is dependent on the success of its small businesses and with so many pandemic-related closures already, we cannot risk losing more businesses due to the escalation of crime and safety issues. It should also be recognized that the loss of businesses equates to the loss of important tax dollars and local employment, which are both imperative to recovery. We recognize the complexity of the social issues, but without urgent, coordinated action, the heavy financial and mental health burden will impede small business recovery and resilience and therefore overall neighbourhood vitality.

Sincerely,

Name  
Business