

## News Release

### **PROPERTY TAX PAYERS SUBSIDIZING FEDERAL POLICING Half a billion dollars the cost of extra work load on local police forces**

(Quebec City, May 29/08) - Even as property taxes continue to increase in municipalities across the country, local taxpayers are subsidizing federal police enforcement to the tune of approximately \$500 million a year, according to a new report on federal policing released today by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) at the Big City Mayors' Caucus (BCMC) being held in Quebec City.

The report, Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing, shows how municipalities have seen their share of policing costs rise dramatically over the last 20 years, while municipal police forces have had to take on more and more of the traditional federal enforcement role.

The \$500 million estimate is the value FCM places on the amount of time municipal police officers spend enforcing federal laws or delivering federal mandates. It is based on 10 per cent of the annual \$5.39 billion spent by municipal governments on local police services.

"Municipal units are usually the first responders on security issues, so they are more and more often expected to enforce laws and provide services that are really within federal jurisdiction, such as port security or drug crime enforcement," said Halifax Regional Municipality Mayor Peter Kelly, who took part in BCMC discussions on the Report today.

"When you consider that only eight cents of every tax dollar collected in Canada goes to municipalities, it is simply unfair that we are being burdened with these additional costs," Mayor Kelly explained. "Municipal taxpayers are essentially subsidizing the federal government. That's just not right."

In Canada, the federal government discharges its policing responsibilities through the RCMP, while provincial police enforce the Criminal Code of Canada and provincial statutes within areas not served by a municipal police service. In all provinces but Ontario and Quebec, the RCMP provides provincial and territorial policing and policing in some 200 municipalities under a standard provincial police services agreement.

In setting the cost of RCMP contract municipal policing, the federal government assumes municipally contracted RCMP officers spend a minimum of between 10 and 30 per cent of their time enforcing federal laws. The report argues that it follows that municipal police officers would also be expected to spend between 10 and 30 per cent of their time enforcing federal laws.

The report says the federal government should reimburse municipalities to no less than 10 percent. "This is a positive first step but we need to go further, in particular in recapturing costs spent on federal initiatives and legislation. In HRM, issues of federal jurisdiction account for nearly 25% of our police duties and we must be

compensated appropriately. This is yet another example of the cost of services being downloaded to municipalities and we need it changed to reflect the demands being placed on municipalities."

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