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Ms. Barbara Dowding
The Catholic Women's League of Canada
527 San Remo Drive
Port Moody, BC V3H 3S6

Dear Ms. Dowding:

I am writing in response to your recent letter concerning the establishment of brothels in Vancouver. It appears that you are under the impression the City of Vancouver is considering the establishment of these facilities. I want to let you know that this is not the case.

The laws regarding prostitution in Canada are the responsibility of the House of Commons and Minister of Justice. The City of Vancouver is committed to honouring the current legislative framework as it relates to this issue - and all others. That said, the City of Vancouver is taking action to help improve the lives of vulnerable women who are drug addicted and involved in prostitution. Our plan includes direct investments in community organizations that provide prevention and outreach services directly to women. It includes working with our provincial government to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to construct social and supportive housing. Today, more than 2,700 units are in progress.

Our plan includes the expansion of outreach and shelter services. And our plan includes supporting innovative new treatment options for people with chronic drug additions. Our plan does not include the establishment of brothels.

Homelessness, drug addiction and mental illness in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside are national issues. People on our streets come here from across Canada. The bottom line is the solutions to the international drug trade and human trafficking go well beyond the borders of one municipality. We need national leadership - and we are making some progress.

On January 23rd, I was proud to join with my colleagues from big cities across Canada to call on the Federal Government to renew their commitment to a national action plan on homelessness - including more supportive housing for people addicted to illegal drugs.

I met with federal officials recently in Ottawa who confirmed that Vancouver will receive funding from the new National Anti-drug Strategy and I am working with the BC Health Minister to achieve a consensus on how to best use these funds. Helping women involved in prostitution will be a top priority for us.

Thank you for taking the time to write and I trust this clarifies the issue.

Yours truly,

Sam Sullivan
MAYOR