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August 23, 2022

The Honorable Tyler Shandro
Minister of Justice and Solicitor General
204, 10800-97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

Dear Minister,

Re: Victim Services Redesign

Minister Shandro, Town of Tofield Council have only recently become aware of the Victim Services Redesign, and to say that we are both shocked and disappointed would be a vast understatement. Victim Services play an integral part in our community, and rural Alberta. Victim Services staff are as essential as first responders, and work cohesively with RCMP. These people help families and individuals through what could be the most traumatic experience of their lives. Having experience in dealing with trauma, unexpected loss, and extreme shock cannot be measured. Now, your government is looking to remove this from our community and proceed with a centralized approach.

The MLA led review did not engage municipalities, nor did it fully engage Victim Services Boards. Had our local Victim Services Board Chair not come forward to Mayor and Council, we would not be aware of this ill-thought-out change. Of interest, the two MLA'S leading this charge were from major urban centres, with no tie, nor thought to the impacts this would have on rural Albertans.

Not only will this change see a loss of jobs within our community, but more importantly it will leave this service to become reliant on an individual(s) residing outside our community boundaries. What does this mean for response time? Does this mean that response could be upwards of hours before assistance is provided, or does this also mean that it will be based upon the availability of staff? Neither of these scenarios is ideal, especially when dealing with crisis. Our current structure is comprised of hard working, caring individuals who provide an immeasurable service in what is the most trying of circumstances. These people respond in a quick, professional, and caring manner. Now, your government is removing this service from our community, and failing those who require what is often the immediate assistance of Victim Services.

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Minister Shandro, we can not fathom the rationale behind this decision, once again without input or consultation from those that this affects most. In our opinion this is a recipe for disaster and stands to only continue to fail rural Alberta. Mayor and Council implore you to pause on this decision and seek input from those forgotten, rural Alberta.

Sincerely,

Debora L. Dueck

Debora Dueck
Mayor

C.C AUMA Membership
 RMA Membership
 Jackie Lovely, MLA