



**PUBLIC
INTEREST
ALBERTA**

LETTER TO THE MAYOR OF EDMONTON AND CITY COUNCIL ON THE THREAT TO TREATY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POSED BY ENCAMPMENT SWEEPS

His Worship Amarjeet Sohi
Mayor, City of Edmonton
2nd Floor, City Hall
1 Sir Winston Churchill Square
Edmonton, AB T5J 2R7

Dear Sir and City Council:

We write to you today with grave concern. As leaders, elders, activists, treaty people and rights holders, we cannot stay silent as the threat to people experiencing houselessness hangs over the heads of hundreds—the majority of whom are Indigenous.

As you are well aware, the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, the City of Edmonton, and other Indigenous led and focused organizations have a longstanding history of collaboration on housing and supports and services, including a Letter of Intent to address the immediate and long-term needs for housing and supportive services for Indigenous people living in the Edmonton region.

As we have watched the unfolding of events over the past several days since it was revealed that the Edmonton Police Service would be engaging in Edmonton's largest decampment event in the City's history, it has become clear that more engagement and intervention is needed than just with typical institutions partners. Every day, dozens of community members connect with

those experiencing homelessness in a tireless effort to provide community, material support, and lifesaving harm reduction services. In the absence of adequate shelter, housing options, and wraparound supports and services, the brunt of this work is falling to those within our communities who are not adequately resourced or compensated.

We are truly living in a crisis in these times. And this crisis demands bold, courageous and loving leadership in action.

We are formally requesting that you immediately convene an emergency City Council meeting to explore the use of your powers as Council to halt the violent and disruptive decampment of hundreds of community members from the only shelter they currently have. At least until the treaty rights and human rights of our neighbours and family can be determined, we implore you to use your power and moral authority to call for a moratorium. We know you understand the hardships experienced by community members in the shelter system. We know you understand these hardships rival and often outweigh those experienced when staying in encampments.

We are committed to supporting you in achieving your goals of an Edmonton for all based on treaty and human rights. Right now, we need to walk together and we need to take a solidly trauma-informed approach to how colonial institutions interact with and support unhoused people.

We remain committed to meeting with you any time.

Sincerely,

Blake Desjarlais, MP for Edmonton-Greisdorf

Bradley Lafortune, Public Interest Alberta

Dr. Joe Vipond, Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Calgary

Heather Smith, President, United Nurses of Alberta

Danielle Larivee, Vice-President, United Nurses of Alberta

Rachelle Gladue and Bryce Ward, Tawaw Outreach

Lewis Cardinal, Project Manager, kihcihkaw askî- Sacred Land, Project Manager, Indigenous Knowledge & Wisdom Centre

Rory Gill, Presient, CUPE Alberta

Coalition of Justice and Human Rights

MAC at McDougall , Muslim Association of Canada (MAC) Edmonton

Gil McGowan, President, Alberta Federation of Labour

Jon Manning, Jon Manning writes

Katy Ingraham, Fleisch Delikatessen

Gary Savard, Greater Edmonton Alliance

Chris Gallaway, Friends of Medicare

Noah Kenneally, Edmonton citizen

Angie Staines, 4B Harm Reduction

Darren McGeown, Arcadia Brewing Co

Mike Parker, President, Health Sciences Association of Alberta