



Honourable Minister Bill Blair
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons

December 22, 2020

Dear Minister Blair,

We hope you are well and hopefully looking forward to a well-deserved break. We thank you for your leadership and support over the past year. We are writing to ensure you have our prebudget consultation recommendations. Our brief is attached.

In this regard, CAFC was recently copied on a letter to you from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), echoing our recommendation to reinstate a Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP). We appreciate this support. We would like to clarify however that the CAFC's recommendation would be to reinstate a JEPP type program for *all* fire departments, not just volunteer firefighter departments. We will explain this rationale.

Volunteer departments are indeed the majority and do have great needs. However, definitions across jurisdictions can vary, rural departments may have agreements with career and composite departments, and career departments may also need assistance. A solution that benefits all fire departments would be most welcomed. We'd like to work with Public Safety Canada and the FCM to advance this.

Our brief also suggests allowing all fire departments infrastructure projects to be eligible for the Gas Tax Fund and requests the modernization of the definition of volunteer firefighters for the CRA's use in allocating the volunteer firefighter tax credit. We support the petition to increase the volunteer firefighter tax credit but would caution that this may create audit issues if the definition is not clarified.

In the new year, we will be providing you with the results of a study of our sector which was done to inform our strategic plan. We hope that it will be of use to Public Safety Canada as well.

In closing, we'd like to wish you and all of the staff at Public Safety Canada a very happy and healthy holiday and all the very best for the new year. We look forward to continuing our work together.

Sincerely,

John McKearney
CAFC President & Whistler Fire Chief
CC: CAFC Board of Directors. Enclosure: Prebudget Brief