**UBCM 2021 Meeting Note – September 10, 2021 Public: Safety Human Sex Trafficking**

**Meeting with Minister Farnworth and staff.**

**Attendees:**

**Town of Gibsons**

Mayor Bill Beamish

Councillor David Croal

CAO Mark Brown

**District of Sechelt**

 Mayor Darnelda Siegers

**For Public Safety Ministry**

Minister Farnworth and Staff

**Background:**

**Human Sex Trafficking**

The Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt and the Sunshine Coast Regional District were recently approached by Cathy Peters in her effort to raise awareness about Human Sex Trafficking in BC and Canada. According to Ms. Peters: human sex trafficking (HT) involves the recruitment, transportation or harbouring of people for the purpose of exploitation through the use of force, coercion, fraud, deception or threats against the victim or person known to them. It is known as modern day slavery. Traffickers seek young victims both to service the demand for sex with those who look young, and because these victims are easier to manipulate and control. Every child can be a target.

Request:
**That the Province, RCMP and municipal police target Human Sex Trafficking and prioritize efforts to** combat & prevent this activity, prosecute offenders and include a public awareness campaign to inform schools, young people and families about ways to prevent Human Sex Trafficking in BC communities.

**Discussion:**

Mayor Beamish focussed on the reduced RCMP resources on the Sunshine Coast that impacts the ability of the detachment to focus on Youth and Crime prevention issues at a time when the communities are impacted by the opioid crisis, homelessness and other social issues. The RCMP have reduced numbers due to recruitment lag, illness and the requirement to provide members to police in other areas, including fires and Ferry Creek logging blockade.

This issue was also raised in discussion with A/Comm. Stubbs, RCMP, and Catherin St. Denis, Policing Branch, in separate meetings this week.

Minister Farnworth acknowledged our concern and informed that the Ministry has established a Human Sex Trafficking working group to examine ways to target this activity. He also commented that in terms of Crime prevention, the Ministry does not engage in this activity as it is community based and there is funding for local programs through the **Civil Forfeiture Program Grants, details of**  which will be announced shortly.

Bill Beamish