



October 27, 2020

ROCKY SIMPSON  
MLA, HAY RIVER SOUTH

**Oral Question 363-19(2):**  
**Policing in Hay River and the Northwest Territories**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on October 19, 2020, regarding the annual costs associated with drug enforcement, specifically in relation to RCMP, courts, and corrections. I noted that it was not possible to provide that breakdown, but committed to determine if any relevant information might be available.

Costs associated with drug enforcement spans many aspects of the justice system in an interrelated manner. In policing, the majority of costs are associated with officer and staff time depending on the calls they are responding to and investigations underway. Within courts and corrections, costs associated with hearings and incarceration become complicated when you have multiple charges being considered in a single case, which cannot be separated out to deal solely with drug related offences. The administrative burden to attempt to make these distinctions and track drug enforcement related costs to this level would not only be immense, but the resulting numbers would not be reliable.

Where we are able to provide some data is through police reported crime statistics. In the Northwest Territories in 2018 (the most recent year for which data is currently available from Statistics Canada), our rate of total drug offences was the highest of any Canadian jurisdiction, however, we did see a 29 per cent decrease from the previous year. The current rate is almost half of what it was in 2008, and it has been trending in the right direction since 2011 with the largest drop yet in 2018.

The Department of Justice is committed to continuing to work with the Departments of Health and Social Services, as well as Education, Culture and Employment to deliver drug awareness education, to help keep our residents and communities safe.

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The Department is also committed to working with our federal partners to access funding and support related to drug enforcement whenever opportunities for collaboration are available.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R.J. Simpson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

R.J. Simpson  
Minister of Justice

- c. Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Deputy Minister, Justice  
Legislative Coordinator, Executive and Indigenous Affairs