



May 31, 2021

ROCKY SIMPSON
MLA, HAY RIVER SOUTH**Oral Question 696-19(2): Illicit Drug Trade**

This letter is in follow-up to the Oral Question you raised on March 31, 2021 regarding the supports available to residents who wish to report drug trafficking and are concerned for their safety as a result of making a report. NWT residents have the option of reporting any crime anonymously via Crime Stoppers. Tips can be submitted online (<https://nwtntips.com>) via text (TIP202 +message to CRIMES (274637)) or by phone (1-800-222-TIPS).

Anonymous tips are strongly encouraged as they can serve as a catalyst for police to gather corroborating evidence. Without witnesses coming forward it can be difficult for police to proceed with a charge. The information provided by witnesses increases the chances that police will be able to obtain a warrant and gather enough evidence to proceed with a charge that has a substantial likelihood of conviction. It is recognized that people may be reluctant to come forward or provide information while living in a small community due to fear of reprisal, however, anyone who has information related to criminal activity can reach out to an RCMP member in their community without fear of being identified to the general public. The RCMP does have numerous protections in place for witnesses, including a National Witness Protection Unit, although this is typically reserved for the most serious cases. NWT residents also have the option of applying for a Peace Bond, Protection Order, or Emergency Protection Order against an individual, depending on the circumstances and relationship between parties.

Witnesses to crime are also able to access victim services workers if desired. The GNWT has eleven community-based victim services workers that provide service to all communities in the NWT. The workers are supportive of victims in a variety of ways, including providing information about the justice system and ensuring the victim is referred to all appropriate resources within the justice system, as well as to supporting agencies.

It is important that RCMP and communities continue to work closely in the development of their Community Action Plans which can include a priority for drug enforcement. The RCMP must also be thoroughly engaged in building their relationships and trust within the communities, which may serve to increase the likelihood of witnesses coming forward to support investigations.

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Thank you for your question and interest in this matter. If you require further information, please contact my office.

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, Justice

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