

Lisa Anderson
Assistant Deputy Minister, BC Corrections
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
SGCorrections.Feedback@gov.bc.ca

Anne Kelly
Commissioner
Correctional Service of Canada
Anne.Kelly@csc-scc.gc.ca

Arlene Thygesen - Director
Correctional Service of Canada - Pacific Regional Headquarters
Arlene.Thygesen@csc-scc.gc.ca

November 19, 2021

Dear ADM Anderson, Commissioner Kelly & Director Thygesen,

RE: CALL TO DECARCERATE AMIDST BC STATE OF EMERGENCY

We are writing as abolitionists and advocates gravely concerned about the conditions in BC correctional centres and federal institutions, following mass flooding, infrastructure failure, and a recently-announced provincial state of emergency.¹ As public health and safety emergencies compound – namely the drug poisoning crisis, the COVID-19 public health emergency, and the current state of emergency – we know that our incarcerated kin and comrades are being left behind, once again.

In particular, the Fraser Valley, which contains a startling concentration of correctional centres and institutions, has been ravaged by catastrophic floods, caused by unmitigated resource extraction and colonial occupation of unceded territory. Like industry, prisons scar this land.

Over recent days, a number of people in the community have contacted federal and provincial correctional centres, to request accurate information about the current conditions inside. While prison administrators and officials claim that the institutions are not (currently) in areas subject to evacuation orders, the most-recent state of emergency is going to have ramifications in the administration of prisons. This includes road and highway closures limiting staff and personnel access to the prison, supply chain shortages, inability to access off-site emergency and ongoing healthcare, and the potential for increased security measures (such as site reclassification or lockdowns). The state of BC prisons remains unacceptable.

¹ [Provincial state of emergency declared](#), November 17, 2021

As we have done throughout COVID-19 and before, we continue to demand the decarceration of prisoners – including federally and provincially sentenced prisoners, as well as those held on remand or in immigration detention.

Prison justice means that no one is left behind – not Indigenous people, disabled people, aging people, parents, or anyone else incarcerated. These communities must be reflected in an emergency response.

Thank you,

Vancouver Prison Justice Day Committee
Wellness Within: An Organization for Health & Justice
Centre for Access to Information and Justice, University of Winnipeg
Centre for Justice Exchange, Bishop's University, QC
Criminalization and Punishment Education Project
Journal of Prisoners on Prisons
Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project
Prisoner Correspondence Project
KPU Social Justice Centre
Defund 604 Network
Joint Effort
East Coast Prison Justice Society
Defund Fraser Valley

CC: Ivan Zinger, Correctional Investigator of Canada, Ivan.Zinger@oci-bec.gc.ca
Jay Chalke, BC Ombudsperson, info@bcombudsperson.ca
Marcia Marchenski, Investigations & Standards Office, Marcia.Marchenski@gov.bc.ca