[DATE]

[MLA NAME]

[MLA ADDRESS]

Dear [MLA NAME]:

I am writing to you to express [MUNICIPALITY]’s concern with changes to the Victims of Crime Fund and the new Victims’ Assistance Program under development.

In 2019, the province held consultations on a new model for Victim Services benefits.  Expanding the scope of the Victims of Crime Fund was not included as a topic for discussion in these consultations, and to date, a summary of these consultations has not been released. However, during consultations, several stakeholders voiced their opposition to expanding the scope of the Victims of Crime Fund and allowing these funds to be put into general provincial revenues. Alberta is now the only province that does not restrict the use of its Victims of Crime fund to services that support victims.

Budget 2021 highlighted the additional revenue the province will receive from all municipalities contributing to policing costs under the new police costing model, a total of $286 million over five years. Given these new funds flowing to the Ministry, it is unclear why additional funds for public safety must be raised by changing the mandate of the Victims of Crime fund. We have heard from our members that funding has been cut for victim services programs across the province, which is particularly surprising after the province increased the provincial fine surcharge that goes directly into the Victims of Crime Fund last year.

[MUNICIPALITY] strongly believes that this fund should be used solely to support long-term, sustainable funding for victims’ financial benefits and services, as originally intended. We also support keeping the current, community-based model for delivering supports and services to victims, which has been recognized nationally as the best in Canada by our Federal Ombudsman and other provincial victim serving organizations. Furthermore, we have heard concerns with the interim financial benefits for victims of crime, specifically difficulty accessing funds and a dramatic reduction in the amount of benefits, so we ask that you restore the former benefits program and ensure that the new Victims’ Assistance Program compensates victims of crime at an equal or greater level than the previous program.

[PLACEHOLDER TO SHARE A STORY OF HOW RECENT CHANGES TO VICTIM SERVICES FUNDING HAS AFFECTED SOMEONE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.]

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

[CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL NAME]

[CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL TITLE]

cc: Brian Turpin, President, Alberta Police Based Victim Services Association