
HALIFAX REGIONAL COUNCIL
January 29, 2002

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:



George McLellan, A/Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: January 22, 2002

SUBJECT: **Proposed Closure of the Drug Analytical Service (DAS) Laboratory
1992 Baffin Street, Dartmouth**

ORIGIN

In November 2001, Health Canada advised the Halifax Regional Police that it was proposed that the Drug Analytical Service (DAS) laboratory located at 1992 Baffin Street in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia close in the spring of 2002.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Mayor write the Premier and the Minister of Health expressing concern of the proposed closure of the Drug Analytical Service Laboratory on 1992 Baffin Street, Dartmouth.

BACKGROUND

The Halifax Regional Police have enjoyed a very close working relationship with the DAS laboratory staff for many years. Operationally we have had the ability to seek assistance on an emergency basis when required and staff have always been available and cooperative. Other agencies within HRM have also enjoyed this Cadillac service. HRM accounts for approximately 50 percent of DAS laboratory business.

DISCUSSION

The closure of the laboratory will have a direct negative impact for the HRP and for other law enforcement agencies within HRM. Not only have the DAS laboratory staff have been available to attend court on short notice but there is also a quick turnaround time for drug samples taken from the port thus reducing the holding time for container cargo. The closure of the DAS laboratory not only has a direct negative impact on the operation of the Halifax Regional Police but also on the operation of other enforcement agencies in this area. At present there are other police agencies outside of HRM who able to drive to Dartmouth with suspected drug packages and get a quick turnaround on the analysis.

Closure of the DAS laboratory will have a direct negative impact on the costs of the Drug Enforcement section of the HRP. Historically the HRP have delivered samples to the DAS laboratory in person whereas shipping drug exhibits to Winnipeg would cost our department thousands of dollars.

The proposed closure of the laboratory not only causes concern about the impact to the present operation of the HRP but to the future operation as well. There is an anticipated growth in population for HRM and due to offshore gas exploration it is expected that HRM may triple it's population within ten years. Cargo tonnage on our waterfront is growing and along with it our drug issues will increase. Having no laboratory within HRM or even within the Atlantic Region is a major concern.

On December 17, 2001, Superintendent Beazley sent a letter to the A/Regional Director of Health Canada outlining the concerns of HRP and requesting that these concerns be forwarded to the Minister. On behalf of HRM the Mayor may wish to write the Premier and the Minister to enforce HRM's concerns.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The closure of the DAS laboratory will cost the Halifax Regional Police and HRM thousands of dollars in shipping and postage each year.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES/BUSINESS PLAN


This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating Reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ATTACHMENTS

Copy of letter from Superintendent Frank Beazley to Ms. Sharon Chard, A/Regional Director, Health Canada, dated December 17, 2001.

Additional copies of this report, and information on its status, can be obtained by contacting the office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

Report Prepared by: Superintendent Frank Beazley, Halifax Regional Police 490-5305

Report Approved by: 
David P. McKinnon, Chief of Police 490-6500



Halifax Regional Police

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December 17th, 2001

Ms. Sharon Chard
A/Regional Director
Healthy Environment & Consumer Safety
Health Canada, Atlantic Region
1505 Barrington Street, Suite 1625
Halifax, N.S. B3J 3Y6

Re: Proposed Closed DAS Laboratory, 1992 Baffin St., Dartmouth, N.S.

I am writing this letter in furtherance to the meeting held on November 27th, 2001 regarding the proposed closure of the DAS Laboratory in the Spring of 2002.

As expressed at the meeting, I have a number of concerns regarding the proposed closure of the DAS Laboratory.

The closure of the Laboratory will have a direct negative impact for my agency and other law enforcement agencies within HRM. We have enjoyed a very close working relationship with your Laboratory staff for many years. Operationally we have had the ability to seek assistance on an emergency basis when required. Your staff have always been available and cooperative. Other agencies within HRM have also enjoyed this cadillac service.

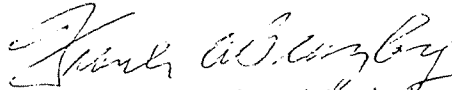
For example, your staff have been available to attend court on short notice. On the ports we have been able to get a quick turnaround on drug samples when holding up container cargo as an example. I am aware of police agencies outside of HRM being able to drive to Dartmouth with suspected drug packages and get a quick turnaround on the analysis. So the closure of the Lab has a direct negative impact, not only on my operation, but the operation of other enforcement agencies in this area.

The next issue is the impact on the costs for my Drug Section. As you can appreciate, we have historically delivered our samples to your Laboratory in person. As HRM accounts for 50% of your business, you can appreciate the new direct costs to my operation that will be in the thousands of dollars. This could not come at a more critical time due to budget restraints in my operation. Shipping my drug exhibits to Winnipeg is unacceptable.

As I expressed at your meeting, I am concerned about the impact to my present operation and my future operation. There is an anticipated growth in population for HRM. Due to offshore gas exploration, it is expected that HRM may triple it's population within ten years. Cargo tonnage on our waterfront is growing. As we grow, our drug issues will increase. Having no Lab not only within HRM, but none in the Atlantic region is a major concern.

I am requesting that you forward my concerns to your Minister regarding this issue.

Yours truly,



Frank A. Beazley, Superintendent
Operational Support Division

FAB/hgm
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cc Chief D. McKinnon
A/Commissioner D. Bishop
Mr. Jack Fagan, CCRA
George McLellan, Acting CAO
Mayor Kelly
Premier Hamm
Geoff Regan, M P