

# bc civil liberties association

L'Association des libertés civiles de la Colombie-Britannique



Mayor Stewart Young,  
City of Langford

2nd Floor - 877 Goldstream Avenue  
Langford, British Columbia  
Canada, V9B 2X8

Dear Mayor Young

I am writing to you with concern over recent statements you made to Times-Colonist reporter Bill Cleverly. As reported by Mr. Cleverly on February 26, 2008, you outlined plans to file suit against individuals who have organized and participated in a protest against construction of the Bear Mountain interchange. Between 50 and 60 officers charged three individuals involved in a small tree-sit protest from the area on 13 February, 2008, an operation you have estimated to have cost the City of Langford more than \$100,000. It has been reported you have received legal advice that you can recover from those involved in the protest the costs of this policing operation, and have publicly stated plans to carry through with that legal advice.

The BCCLA is very concerned about the precedent such a suit would create. Your threatened law suit would seem to be akin to charging a fee for police services. Policing is a public service funded by Canadian taxpayers. Charging for policing costs could potentially deter people from reporting crime or requesting police assistance. Furthermore, it is questionable whether there is legal authority to advance a suit of this nature.

While many residents of Langford may be frustrated with the costs of the policing operation, you have admitted that such a suit will not result in reimbursement, only adding to the costs borne by taxpayers.

For the reasons stated above, the BC Civil Liberties Association urges you to publicly retract your threat of civil suit. The public should be reassured that police services in Langford are available free of charge.

Respectfully yours,

Jason Gratl, President  
BC Civil Liberties Association

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