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20-17

Special Prosecutors approve charges following investigation at BC Legislature

Victoria – The BC Prosecution Service (BCPS) announced today that Special Prosecutors David Butcher QC and Brock Martland QC have approved charges following an extensive RCMP investigation into the activities of senior staff at the British Columbia Legislature. Craig Harley James has now been charged with four counts of breach of trust by a public officer and two counts of fraud in excess of \$5000.

The indictment charging Mr. James with these offences was filed on December 17, 2020 under BC Supreme Court file number 181243. Mr. James made his first appearance on this matter today in the Victoria Courthouse. His next appearance has been set for January 27, 2021.

On November 20, 2018, the BCPS announced that the Assistant Deputy Attorney General for the BCPS, Peter Juk, QC, had appointed Mr. Butcher and Mr. Martland as Special Prosecutors to provide legal advice to the RCMP during the investigation of these allegations. The Special Prosecutors were given a mandate to provide legal advice to the RCMP investigators as may be necessary, conduct any related charge assessment, and assume conduct of the prosecution if charges were approved. The appointment of the Special Prosecutors was intended to avoid any potential for real or perceived improper influence in the administration of justice.

The charge assessment guidelines applied by the BCPS and Special Prosecutors in reviewing all Reports to Crown Counsel are established in the BCPS Crown Counsel Policy Manual and are available online at:

www.gov.bc.ca/charge-assessment-guidelines

As this matter is now before the court neither the Special Prosecutors nor the BCPS will be releasing additional information or commenting further at this time. If, at the end of all related court proceedings, the Special Prosecutor determines it to be in the public interest that further information about this matter should be provided to the public, the Special Prosecutor will issue a Clear Statement in consultation with the BCPS.

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