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BC Prosecution Service response to public statements by Kelowna RCMP

Victoria – In a recent news report the officer in charge of Kelowna RCMP was quoted as telling Kelowna City Council that for 2021 “78 per cent of charges sent to the BCPS still have not been assessed” and “the total number of charges for the year, including violence, mischief, and other offences, was 3,358 with 2,675 awaiting assessment, or nearly 80 per cent.”

These statements are grossly inaccurate and they unjustifiably cast doubt on the professionalism and effectiveness of hard-working Crown Counsel. There is no Crown charge assessment backlog and this is not an issue of differences in systems or tracking.

The simple fact is that the overwhelming majority of the Reports to Crown Counsel the BC Prosecution Service received from the Kelowna RCMP in 2021 were assessed by Crown Counsel within 30 days or less of being received and have been approved and are currently pending before the court, awaiting disposition, trial, or sentencing. A small number, approximately 120 in total, are either awaiting assessment by Crown Counsel or have been returned to the police for further information or follow up.

After media reports about the statements made to the Kelowna City Council, the officer in charge contacted senior Crown Counsel, specifically acknowledging that the statements had been inaccurate and apologizing for making them.

There will be no further comment on this matter by the BC Prosecution Service.

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