



MEDIA RELEASE

BC Crown Counsel Association files formal workload grievance with BC Prosecution Service over inadequate staffing in Okanagan/Kootenay offices

Vancouver, B.C. (May 22, 2025): Chronic understaffing of Crown Counsel in five southern interior communities has led the BC Crown Counsel Association (BCCCA) to escalate the issue to a formal grievance against their employer, the BC Prosecution Service (BCPS).

The association represents 550 Crown prosecutors around the province, and while staffing and resource shortages have been impacting the ability of Crown Counsel all over B.C. to do their jobs effectively for several years, an ongoing shortage in “Region 4” (Okanagan/Kootenay) is particularly acute.

The grievance concerns Crown offices in Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton, Nelson and Cranbrook. It alleges the BCPS has continuously breached an article of the Collective Agreement “by failing to exercise its management rights in a reasonable manner with respect to staffing levels in Region 4.”

The association says inadequate staffing and an increasing workload in growing communities is impacting the prosecutors’ ability to prepare and bring cases to court in a timely manner.

The grievance states, “the Employer’s failure to reasonably and appropriately staff Region 4 has caused additional stress and anxiety to Crown Counsel who are concerned about their abilities to meet their professional obligations.” The association also says understaffing and leaving vacancies unfilled leaves “little ability to accommodate illnesses, vacation requests, and even maternity leaves where several months’ notice is given”.

“The region needs 20 more Crown counsel to handle the load, about a 25 per cent increase,” says Adam Dalrymple, president of the BC Crown Counsel Association. “Our job is to uphold the rule of law in B.C. and keep the public safe to the very best of our ability. However, the workload is excessive, and a shortage of Crown Counsel threatens our ability to bring cases to court on time. It also means burnout among our members. These working conditions affect our ability to attract and retain more Crown Counsel.

“Good lawyers can choose where they want to work,” Dalrymple adds. “They may choose to go to other jurisdictions or join a private law firm unless we work hard to keep a career as a Crown prosecutor attractive to the best new talent.”

The Association is seeking an arbitrator’s declaration that the employer has breached the Collective Agreement and must meet its contractual obligations concerning adequate Crown Counsel staffing.

About the BC Crown Counsel Association

The BC Crown Counsel Association is committed to the promotion and protection of the professional interest of its members; and working towards collective bargained agreements between the Government of the Province of British Columbia and its members. Since 2000, the Association has acted as the sole bargaining agent for all Crown Counsel in British Columbia; and over the years has become part of the fabric of the legal community – educating the public of who we are and what we do; and lending our voice in justice reform matters. Visit BCProsecutors.com.

-30-

Media contact:

Trevor Pancoust

tpancoust@pacegroup.com

778.386.0843