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April 18th, 2011

Ms. S. Blyth
New Fountain Shelter
c/o Portland Hotel Society
51B West Cordova Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6B 1C8

Dear Ms. Blyth:

I am writing this letter to you to emphasize the Vancouver Police Department's ongoing support for maintaining homeless shelters in the City of Vancouver. The HEAT shelters have been an important part of Vancouver's shelter strategy for several years and have been supported by the VPD since they first began opening several years ago.

No one can argue that shelters do not bring people indoors and protect them from extreme weather conditions. It has become clear that without shelter beds, many dozens of people down on their luck will sleep in unhealthy and undesirable conditions.

Aside from providing shelter from extreme weather conditions, it has also been the police department's experiences that properly run shelters reduce some of the disorder associated to people sleeping on sidewalks, laneways and storefronts. If run properly, shelters can also protect vulnerable people, particularly women, from predators.

Based on the experiences related to me about the New Fountain, I learned that it operates in a responsible way and generates very few incidents needing police attendance; that is commendable.

Rest assured, the Vancouver Police Department will support existing shelters to help keep homeless people safe and will continue to lend our support to shelters until the transition to more suitable housing is made.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Chu".

Jim Chu
Chief Constable

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