Justice
Public Safety Division
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October 20, 2026

Jim Smolik
Interim Executive Director
Keystone Agricultural Producers Inc.
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Dear Jim Smolik:

Thank you for your email to the Honourable Matt Wiebe, Minister of Justice and Attorney General; the Honourable Ron Kostyshyn, Minister of Agriculture; and the Honourable Bernadette Smith, Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness. We are pleased to respond on their behalf.

We recognize the challenges facing the farming community. The Manitoba government appreciates the important role that farmers and agricultural producers play in our province, and we understand that rural communities face unique public safety challenges.

The Scrap Metal Act came into force in July 2022, in response to a sharp increase in the number of catalytic converter thefts in Manitoba. The new legislation established requirements for sale and purchase with the intent to disrupt resale opportunities for illegally obtained scrap metal. The legislation includes identification and record-keeping requirements for sellers and dealers, inspection authorities for peace officers, and restrictions on sales transactions. The legislation also establishes restricted items, including metallic wire, which are subject to additional measures. These include a prohibition on cash transactions and mandatory reporting of purchases to law enforcement.

In January 2026 the Manitoba government announced $290,000 in ongoing funding for the new Brandon Crisis Response Unit. Launched in fall of 2025, the unit pairs a Brandon Police Service (BPS) officer with a mental health clinician from Prairie Mountain Health to respond to calls where people are experiencing a mental health crisis. We are pleased by your feedback that this has made positive change in the community.

The Manitoba government is also taking action to strengthen public safety and address crime in rural and northern communities. In April 2025, the Manitoba government announced a $3.3 million investment to expand the Manitoba RCMP Emergency Response Team in rural and northern Manitoba. This specialized team will now operate at full capacity and be ready to address high-risk situations.

In further partnership with the RCMP, the Manitoba government has invested $2 million to expand the Operational Communications Centre, which acts as the intake and dispatch command centre for responding to emergencies. This investment adds a total of 16 additional RCMP officers and dispatchers to expand the centre and help strengthen capacity of law enforcement to respond to emergencies and critical incidents across the province.

Since June 2024, the Manitoba government has also supported Manitoba homeowners, renters and businesses with a Security Rebate Program to offset the cost of security equipment and damage repairs. The Business Security Rebate Program has provided eligible businesses with a rebate of up to $2,500 (excluding tax) per location for security equipment and repairs related to property damage. The program closed effective August 31, 2026, after paying millions of dollars to thousands of Manitoba businesses.

Manitoba Justice also oversees and implements various crime prevention strategies and initiatives that aim to prevent criminal behaviour before it starts by addressing factors that put Manitobans at risk. For example, we support Community Mobilization (CM), which is a multi-sectoral and collaborative approach to community safety that brings social services together to develop a coordinated response that supports at-risk families and individuals. Through dedicated funding, Manitoba currently supports 15 CM initiatives across the province. CM initiatives have demonstrated reduced calls for police service; improved involvement in Child and Family Services; reduced involvement with the criminal justice system; connection to new services and resources, including mental health and cultural services; and more.

Manitoba Agriculture shares KAP's concerns about the impacts of rural crime on Manitoba producers and supports the efforts underway across government to address these challenges. We will continue working in an all-of-government approach to support producers, strengthen rural communities, and help ensure Manitoba farmers can focus on running their operations and contributing to the provincial economy.

The Manitoba government is providing funding to allow the RCMP General Investigative Section (GIS) to hire a designated officer who will investigate livestock-related crimes and enhance the protection of cattle and other livestock in Manitoba, while also supporting a Manitoba-based livestock inspection initiative. RCMP investigators will work directly with producers and other law enforcement agencies to enforce provincial livestock-related laws and the Criminal Code. Enforcement of these laws will help deter cattle theft and fraud.

The Manitoba government appreciates Keystone Agricultural Producers' advocacy on behalf of the agricultural industry and its efforts to identify practical approaches to improving safety in rural communities. We want to assure you that the Manitoba government takes the concerns you have raised seriously. While we have taken steps to address crime and public safety challenges in the province, we recognize there is much more work to do.

We will take the recommendations provided by KAP into consideration as we look to develop new legislative initiatives and ways to improve community safety across our province.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Manitoba government.

Sincerely,

Nick Paulet
Executive Director
Policing Services and Public Safety
Department of Justice

Robert Ermel
Director
Policy and Legislation
Department of Agriculture

c Honourable Matt Wiebe, Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Honourable Ron Kostyshyn, Minister of Agriculture
Neil Van Overloop, Policy Manager, KAP