



Ensuring Effective Border Security Led by the RCMP

The RCMP is the only national police agency capable of effectively securing Canada's border between official ports of entry. With extensive criminal intelligence networks and partnerships, the RCMP plays a critical role in detecting and intercepting illegal migration, drug trafficking, and organized crime. To this end, the Government of Canada must commit to investment in RCMP personnel, technology, equipment, and training while ensuring streamlined applicant processes to maintain and enhance border security.



Introduction

Canada's border security is a national priority, requiring a coordinated, well-resourced, and highly trained law enforcement approach. As the world's longest land border, the Canada-U.S. border presents unique security challenges, including illegal migration, human trafficking, drug and firearms smuggling, and organized crime.

Recent concerns from the U.S. administration regarding border security have led to the Canadian government announcing a \$1.3 billion investment in border infrastructure and technology. However, this investment falls short in addressing the critical need for additional law enforcement personnel. Discussions about expanding the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA) mandate to patrol between official ports of entry are misguided and ultimately do not present a workable solution. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is the only police agency equipped, trained, and authorized to manage border security between official ports of entry. Any diversion of resources or authority away from the RCMP would weaken Canada's national security and border enforcement efforts.

Position

The National Police Federation (NPF) strongly opposes any attempt to shift border security responsibilities away from the RCMP. Instead, the federal government must make sustained investments in the RCMP's Federal Policing Program to enhance national security and border enforcement capabilities. The RCMP is the only agency that:

- Is fully trained and equipped to handle criminal investigations, patrol rural and remote border areas, investigate organized crime and national security threats between and at official border crossings. RCMP Members already receive the highest level of training, including specialized border security duties, unlike other public safety agencies.
- Is a truly integrated police service, an operational model envied across the world (including the U.S.), that has established partnerships with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Homeland Security, and Canadian law enforcement agencies, ensuring seamless intelligence-sharing and operational coordination and response.
- Is equipped and operates in rural, remote, and high-risk areas across the Canadian landscape, intercepting illegal migrants, drug and weapons traffickers, and disrupts organized crime networks.

Background

- Canada shares a ~9,000 km border with the U.S., requiring a specialized and coordinated law enforcement response.
- The RCMP is responsible for policing between official border crossings, while CBSA manages border security at official ports of entry such as airports, land crossings, and seaports for travelers and cargo.
- The CBSA's union, the Customs Immigration Union (CIU), has advocated for an expanded role for the CBSA, but they have also publicly stated that the CBSA is already understaffed by approximately 2,000 to 3,000 personnel and cannot meet its current mandate of ports of

entry, rail and truck traffic, and the CBSA lacks the capacity to expand its enforcement mandate beyond official entry points.ⁱ

- CBSA employees are not trained or qualified to take on the same duties as RCMP officers, nor do they have the authorities required to undertake what the RCMP already does.
- CBSA employees are not regulated by any independent, provincial civilian oversight body, to independently investigate use-of-force or more serious incidents, raising additional concerns about expanding its enforcement mandate.
- Civilian oversight of law enforcement is an expectation of the Canadian public and is welcomed by the NPF for its Membership. To include CBSA employees under provincial oversight regimes would require significant legislative and policy changes.
- Other agencies, such as provincial police, sheriffs, and conservation officers, who have recently been deployed to the border to assist the RCMP in the short-term, lack federal policing powers and cannot effectively take on long-term border enforcement responsibilities.

The Case for RCMP-Led Border Security

- The RCMP's Federal Policing Program currently has ~4,000 Regular Members but requires at least 1,000 additional personnel to meet Canada's growing border and national security needs.
- Expanding CBSA's mandate or another, similar law enforcement agency would require extensive training reforms, significant new funding, and extensive legislative and policy changes, taking years to implement and diverting resources from effective, existing RCMP operations.
- The RCMP, with the NPF, is already working to enhance recruitment efforts to address personnel needs, working to reduce processing times and increase training capacity at Depot. By implementing practical solutions, recruitment will be more expeditious and provide the organizational flexibility required by the RCMP to meet and expand its capacity.
- The current approach of deploying provincial officers, sheriffs, and conservation officers is a welcome temporary measure, but not a sustainable, long-term solution.
- Sustained and committed investments into the RCMP, specifically its Federal Policing line of business and associated personnel, rather than trying to create a duplicated enforcement model through the CBSA or another law enforcement agency, ensures that border security resources are effectively allocated where they are needed most.

Call to Action

The National Police Federation urges the federal government to:

1. Reaffirm the RCMP's role at the border:

- Reinforce that policing the border outside of official ports of entry remains the RCMP's responsibility.

2. Increase RCMP Federal Policing officers:

- Commit to hiring a minimum of 1,000 additional RCMP officers to meet long-term border and national security needs and ensure the funding for the RCMP Federal Police Program remains stable and untouched.
- 3. Accelerate the RCMP application and training process:**
- Expanding Depot training capacity from 40 to at least 55 troops per year would produce approximately 480 additional RCMP officers annually, significantly bolstering border security efforts and meeting operational needs.
 - The current average nine-month applicant processing time must be streamlined and expedited to reduce delays, ensuring more qualified candidates enter training and join the RCMP faster.
 - Align permanent residency requirements with those of the Canadian Armed Forces, eliminating the requirement to be in Canada for three out of the last five years before applying to the RCMP, at a minimum for the Experienced Police Officer Program.
- 4. Streamline the procurement process:**
- Expedite the availability of new technologies and equipment for the RCMP to enhance border security operations.
 - Expand or create exemptions to the standard lengthy procurement process for equipment essential to ensure public safety.
- 5. Expand fully integrated specialized units and intelligence sharing:**
- Follow through with expanding fully integrated specialized units and the intelligence directive to promote information sharing, collaboration, and joint enforcement.

*Approved by the NPF Board of Directors
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References

ⁱ 2024. Protecting Canada's borders requires immediate investment in CBSA officers [online] Available at: <https://psacunion.ca/protecting-canadas-borders-requires-immediate>