



**SOS PRESENTS CONCERNS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF BC RETAILERS  
TO DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ROUNDTABLE ON ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME**

Canadians paying \$590 annual “theft tax” due to retail violence, theft and vandalism

**VANCOUVER, B.C. (Feb. 27, 2026)** – Save Our Streets (SOS) shared the plight of thousands of frustrated business owners and employees across British Columbia with the federal government yesterday at a Department of Justice meeting in Ottawa focusing on Canada’s nationwide retail crime crisis and the proposed *Bail and Sentencing Reform Act* (Bill C-14).

Speaking on behalf of SOS and Retail Council of Canada colleagues was Co-Founder Clint Mahlman, who is also the Chief Operating Officer of London Drugs and a Retail Council of Canada Board Member. London Drugs is a dramatic example of the severity of the nationwide retail crime crisis, with many frontline employees having to wear stab-proof as they and shoppers face daily harassment, and one location alone losing more than \$10 million over the past decade, leading to its closure last month.

With the federal government currently gathering feedback on Bill C-14, Mahlman made federal elected officials aware of the situation in B.C. and other provinces. In a recent province-wide Research Co. survey in B.C., 66 per cent of respondents said the federal government is not doing enough to protect them, and 71 per cent of the people who were the victim of a crime but didn’t report it because they lack confidence in the justice system.

“Retail violence, theft, and vandalism are the fastest growing crimes due to the increasing involvement and sophistication of organized retail crime rings, the lack of legislation and the lack of consequences,” says Mahlman. “Retailers across Canada are having their businesses held hostage by organized repeat offenders that are committing crimes in Hamilton one day and in Vancouver the next. Bill C-14 is a good start, but it will only be effective if the federal government provides the legislation and funding to enforce and administer the Bill.”

SOS added its voice to the thousands of retailers calling for:

- the introduction of **specific criminal code offences for organized retail crime**;
- legislation (like California’s penal code 490.4) that specifically addresses the **online marketplaces and fencing** that funds organized retail crime;
- a **national database** that coordinates information quickly, so repeat, chronic offenders are monitored and reported into the system, enabling police across Canada to work together in a faster, more coordinated way;

- ensuring the judicial system considers **privacy rights** in a way that does more to protect citizens from the criminals that use those rights to shield themselves from the law;
- ensuring **“theft over \$5,000”** can apply to the accumulation of theft (not just single offences) when it comes to charging and sentencing; and,
- additional funding for more prosecutors and more judges.

“The daily lawlessness, violence and chaos we’re seeing in stores across B.C. would never be tolerated if it were happening here in Ottawa at the Parliament Buildings, so why are the elected official working here not making the transformative changes we need to ensure it’s not happening anywhere in Canada,” adds Mahlman. “Every time they’re caught, repeat offenders tell our loss prevention officers they’ll be back and know our justice system will do little or nothing to stop them. We know the repeat offenders and gangs targeting stores across the country are working in a very organized way, it’s time for Canadian law enforcement, our judicial system and all levels of government to do the same.”

Recognizing that organized criminals prey on people with mental health, addiction, brain injury and substance abuse issues to do their work for them, SOS is also calling for increased funding specifically so provinces can provide the detoxification beds, treatment beds, and transition support required to break the cycle mental health and addiction crisis.

In SOS’s recent survey, 87 per cent said addiction and mental illnesses contribute significantly to crime and public safety issues in their communities, with 66 per cent saying neither the justice system nor the federal government are doing enough to respond to addiction and mental health issues.

### **About Save Our Streets**

Save Our Streets is a coalition of 120-plus community and business organizations representing every corner of British Columbia. SOS members are committed to seeing governments bring order and public safety back to communities across British Columbia. Concerned citizen groups, and B.C. businesses interested in joining or supporting SOS are invited to submit online at [SaveOurStreets.ca](https://SaveOurStreets.ca) or contact [info@saveourstreets.ca](mailto:info@saveourstreets.ca).

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